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CHANGING PERSPECTIVES IN MODERN LITERATURE: A SYMPOSIUM

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COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

VOLUME VII SPRING 1955 NUMBER 2

METAMORPHOSES OF MODERN POETRY

CLAUDE VIGÉE

WALKING in Hegel's footsteps, Jacques Maritain defines poetry as "that intercommunication between the inner being of Things and the inner being of the human Self which is a kind of divination" (*Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, p. 3). The mode of this intercommunication is determined by historical factors, material and spiritual, which affect both our apperception of things and our knowledge of the self. For the modern sensibility, these factors are fundamentally of two kinds.

The first rests upon the Christian tradition of hatred of the world and alienation from nature. This typically Western trait is enhanced, through a strange paradox of history, by the Cartesian *cogito* and the subsequent development of an autonomous self, culminating in the egotistic romantic *moi*—while the growing ugliness of exterior life, due to extreme industrialization, mechanization, and commercialization, brings about an even more decided retreat of the sensibility from its unfriendly surroundings. The second factor is the anti-Christian humanistic and Stoic tradition which begins with the Renaissance, triumphing, on the ideological side, in Cartesianism and the atheism of the Enlightenment, and giving birth, on the side of sensibility, to the universal nihilism of the last hundred years. Nietzsche's proclamation of "the death of God" is the logical outcome of this development.

In poetry the emergence of symbolism as the dominant means of expression is closely related to these phenomena. True modern symbols, as contrasted with myth or allegory, are the sign of the absence, or the nonbeing, of what was formerly believed to be the perennial divine reality: "Le ciel est mort" (Mallarmé, 1864). They first reveal the anguish caused by an unmediated, unapproachable, swiftly receding transcendental deity. Later, at the limit of this vanishing of the heavenly absolute, they disclose "the death of God," the proximity of the abyss

of nothingness—a negative transcendence. When and where a transcendental absolute has a tendency to become negative, the symbol in the modern, stricter sense emerges as the expression of this spiritual annihilation of being. The starting point of this process is to be found in the early Renaissance and in baroque metaphorical language. It has been the function of the symbol in nineteenth- and twentieth-century imagination—through the medium of accumulated and distorted objects, devoid of a proper substance and reality—to allude to the fundamental absence of *any* reality in human existence, to hint finally at "God's death" and at the triumph of "le néant" in all categories of human values. Modern symbolism is therefore inseparable from modern nihilism, of which it indicates the progress towards despair and self-destruction.

The history of modern poetry in the West is the history of this progress; it reflects the ways in which poetic sensibility has at different periods met the situation created by the growth of nihilistic attitudes; it represents the means which the *moi* has sought in order to hasten this progress or to distract itself from its sufferings. All kinds of reactions to this excruciating experience of the void have occurred. To enumerate them is to classify the main tendencies of Western poetry, and to uncover the singleness of purpose which underlies their apparent disorder.

Many modern critics, rightly obsessed with the meaning of Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God, have neglected the surviving Christian ethos. But to omit either of these two contrapuntal themes condemns the student of literature to forget the essentially dialectic nature of our affective experience, to leave unexplained the permanent contradictions of our poetry, its oscillation between extreme negation and extreme affirmation, between pure nihilism and ecstatic, Dionysian "Lebensbejahung."

As Albert Camus has shown in *L'Homme révolté*, the world of antiquity came to an end when man excluded himself from nature, i.e., from the world of things. And the triumphant Christian world began to totter on its foundations when man

> décide de s'exclure de la grâce et de vivre par ses propres moyens. Le progrès, de Sade à nos jours, a consisté à élargir de plus en plus le lieu clos où, selon sa propre règle, régnait farouchement l'homme sans dieu. On a poussé de plus en plus les frontières du camp retranché, face à la divinité, jusqu'à faire de l'univers entier une forteresse contre le dieu déchu et exilé. L'homme, au bout de sa révolte, s'enfermait; sa grande liberté consistait seulement, du château tragique de Sade au camp de concentration, à bâtir la prison de ses crimes. Mais l'état de siège peu à peu se généralise, la revendication de liberté veut s'étendre à tous. Il faut bâtir alors le seul royaume qui s'oppose à celui de la grâce, celui de la justice, et réunir enfin la communauté humaine sur les débris de la communauté divine . . . Dieu mort, restent les hommes, c'est-à-dire l'histoire qu'il faut comprendre et bâtir [pp. 131-132].

In these few lines Camus sketches the essential process which Western

mankind has undergone since the eighteenth century and which vitally affects its principal witnesses, art and poetry.

The mediaeval Christian lived oriented toward the divine being, who is not in nature. (Therefore, man, in search of God, also excludes himself from nature, to which the pagan sensibility felt such a close kinship.) God is absent from nature as a tangible factor, but he is represented in the world by a whole host of "delegates." There exists in the Christian cosmos a visible Jacob's ladder, on which various mediators, intercessors, messengers, constantly hurry from the *Deus absconditus* to the faithful, from the Great Mediator, Christ incarnate, both God and man, down to the humblest village priest. For mediaeval man, the mediated Christian Godhead and its creation were positive, although unequal, categories of being. To the Renaissance individualist, to the Cartesian rationalist, and to the skeptic of the Enlightenment alike, only the reasonable human ego, the source of true knowledge and right action, remains unquestionably *one* and *real*.

In Goethe's early Faust monologue, in Jean Paul Richter's atheistic "Dream of the Dead Christ," in the "terror-haunted" Coleridge of "Limbo" and the "Ode to Dejection," in the Wordsworth of "The world is too much with us," of the "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality," in the middle and later Hölderlin, in Alfred de Vigny's major works, we see for the first time, among modern poets, the clear awareness of the deterioration, and progressive impairment, of the reality function in the human sensibility. These poets begin to perceive what Valéry will bluntly assert a century later: "La réalité est ce qui ne ressemble à rien."

Vigny senses the world as "un monde avorté," abandoned by a cold, silent, distant divinity. This mute God is perhaps already a dying or defunct God. Confronted with such inhospitableness, Vigny retires into his famous ivory tower of intellectual pride and refusal of hope:

> Le juste opposera le dédain à l'absence
> Et ne répondra plus que par un froid silence
> Au silence éternel de la divinité.

He is a Cornelian stoic *faute de mieux*, but apparently not an outright, nihilistic atheist.

Baudelaire's late Christian sensibility undergoes, like that of his contemporary Gérard de Nerval, a pendular movement between a dwindling positive and a growing negative absolute. In this oscillation the latter pole is to gain more and more power, as can be seen from Baudelaire's fascination with "le néant":

> Comme tu me plairais, o nuit, sans ces étoiles...

The spiritual ambivalence which Jacques Maritain discovers in modern poetry between being and nonbeing can be seen in its inception in Baude-

laire. There are countless allusions to this situation in his poems; but Baudelaire describes it in almost clinical terms in his private journals. "Il y a dans tout homme à toute heure deux postulations simultanées, l'une vers Dieu, l'autre vers Satan." In the Baudelairean man there is a double striving, upwards and downwards, towards the good, the real, the perfect, and—simultaneously—towards evil, nothingness, the monstrous grimaces of the abyss. This double tendency manifests itself, either as *vaporization* (the Devil being the "savant chimiste" performing in him this volatilizing experiment of his creative will and formative power) or as *condensation*, i.e., crystallization of the will into works of art and positive moral deeds.

In other words, Baudelaire feels at times the pole towards which his spiritual being is drawn as the source of all reality; at other times he regards this same pole as the center of an all-pervading nothingness. Like Verlaine, who pushes this uncertainty to a sadly comical extreme both in art and in life, Baudelaire is not sure concerning the nature of his transcendence, and therefore upsets his own scale of values according to his latest intuition. It may be an exaltation of beauty, reality, being—but always on the transcendental level of "L'Azur," from which it never comes down to existential mediocrity—or it may be radical negation, "soif du néant" as well as "peur du néant." In that vibration between opposites, which implies a constant and terrible tension, the Baudelairean instrument produces its contradictory tunes; hymns to beauty and being, and voices of what is worse than death for man, both come out of a sensibility stretched between an ever-closer Hell and an ever-receding Heaven.

When Baudelaire experiences transcendence negatively, he attributes to this inverted god the (equally inverted) attributes of the Platonic divinity. For him, as for Nerval, it is not certain whether the traditional transcendental values of beauty, knowledge, and virtue do not perhaps actually originate in nothingness, and remain rooted in essential falsity. Even poetry, like sexual love (at other times his sole goddess and refuge), partakes of the negation by which the ego is subdued. Conversely, there often appears in Baudelaire, besides "la conscience dans le mal," a "complaisance dans le mal," a pleasure in evil, which corresponds to, and substitutes for, the eternal angelic bliss in divine perfection. Between the two there is sometimes no more than the interval of a lightning flash; yet even this lightning, which makes the difference between salvation and damnation, is not to be accounted for in terms of free will. God or the Devil is responsible. When the Devil acts, "tout est abîme," action, desire, dream, words—even the words of which the poem is made, and whose deeper abysmal nature contradicts the creation of any poem. God, for Baudelaire, often slips into Satan's clothes. "Je

change l'or en fer, / et le paradis en enfer" (*Alchimie de la Douleur*). The result is doubt, terror, paralysis.

Together with this oscillation there grows that horror of life and nature which sounds through the whole collection of the *Fleurs du mal*. For Baudelaire, just as for his contemporary Matthew Arnold, "Nature and man can never be fast friends." Life is felt as a malediction, a trap. Individual man is continuously torn by the double "postulation" towards being and nonbeing. History itself is seen as a cemetery, and the revolutionary world of 1848 is little more than a place of absurd destruction where, as in Arnold's poem, "Ignorant armies clash by night."

"Vivre est un mal : c'est un secret de tous connu." We recognize here the familiar traits of the later "verlorenes Ich"—man has lost not only the world, but the unity of his own personality, and is the prey of antagonistic demonlike forces. "To be the prey of" becomes synonymous with "to live, to exist." Nature and instinctive life are the media as well as the hated objects of this torture. No wonder the poet often longs for that annihilation which his other, ontologically grounded, self loathes; Baudelaire, in moments of overwhelming anguish, expresses his "goût du néant," speaks of "l'enfer où mon cœur se plait." This "cœur qui fuit la vérité," when forced into salvation by an overzealous angel, can only answer desperately : "Je ne veux pas!" In such moods Baudelaire's *moi* turns into a "phantom" :

> Dans les caveaux d'insondable tristesse . . .
> où, seul avec la Nuit, maussade hôtesse . . .
> . . . cuisinier aux appétits funèbres,
> je fais bouillir et je mange mon cœur . . .

Against the manifestation of the downward "postulation," we must match those luminous utterances which express precisely the opposite tendency : "l'extase de la vie." In the desolate and dark existential world, poetry, and man as poet, take on the function of the sun ("Quand ainsi qu'un poète il descend dans les villes"—"Le Soleil"). The poet may himself be struck with blindness. His eyes remain staring upward to Heaven, even though he sees nothing there but blackness. The nostalgia of childhood is to Baudelaire an intimation of the existence of another realm of being; in the poem "Elévation" he describes that purer space. The Baudelairean system of sensory "correspondances" is based on a belief in such a realm, to be made trans-apparent through synaesthetic interrelationships. But, like everything else in Baudelaire's dualistic universe, these "correspondances" are often taken by their author as reflecting, not the "foyer saint des rayons primitifs . . . dont les yeux mortels, dans leur splendeur entière, Ne sont que des miroirs obscurcis et plaintifs," not "le flambeau vivant . . . Me sauvant de tout piège et de tout péché grave," but rather the opposite pole of absolute negation. The functional ambivalence of the "correspondances" is clearly shown

in the sonnet bearing this title. Time devours the heart, individual life is but "une oasis d'horreur dans un désert d'ennui." True being is absent.

> Mais mon cœur, que jamais ne visite l'extase,
> Est un théâtre où l'on attend
> Toujours, toujours en vain, l'Être aux ailes de gaze!
> ("L'Irréparable")

Nevertheless, art and poetry, "l'admirable faculté poétique," do remain a testimony of man's dignity before the abysmal demon-god ("Les Phares"). And where art fails, lust or death will come to give the human sufferer a helping hand. However, Baudelairean values, like art, sensuous dream, love, or redeeming death, remain always subject to the principle of reversibility; Baudelaire never is quite sure of their nature or essence in ontological terms, and the tension between "ange et sirène" remains unsolved to the very end:

> Que tu viennes du ciel ou de l'enfer, *qu'importe,*
> O Beauté...
>
> O mort, vieux capitaine, il est temps, levons l'ancre...
> Nous voulons, tant ce feu nous brûle le cerveau,
> Plonger au fond du gouffre, enfer ou ciel, *qu'importe...*

Qu'importe—this basic doubt is formulated, even paraded, by Baudelaire under the provoking title of "L'Amour du mensonge." In a similar way, he praises the renegade St. Peter:

> Saint-Pierre a renié Jésus? Il a bien fait.

This is making a cult of despair, a virtue of deprivation. Verlaine also, to the extent of self-parody, thrived on this alternation between *Sagesse* and *Luxures*, devout choir-boy litanies and blasphemy.

We have dwelt at some length on Baudelaire because his work contains in germ all the attitudes which manifest themselves separately in the later generations of modern European poets sharing the conflicting heritage of Christian faith and post-Christian self-centered nihilism. What, in Baudelaire, remains a single agonizing choice that makes him waver, finally paralyzes him, and turns him into the "Héautontimorouménos," the torturer of himself, divides after Baudelaire into several mutually exclusive ideologies.

In the main, the fascination for "le néant," already shown by Baudelaire, persists. This current, eddying around Mallarmé, and later spurred by the Nietzschean proclamation of God's death, constitutes the dominant force in modern literature. We will call it the nihilistic tradition, the poetry of exile from being.

At the same time there is a reaction against nihilism, in the form of a reawakening of, or an ostensible return to, the Christian faith, a movement not unlike that of the French Jansenists (Pascal, Racine) in the

midst of the triumphant egocentric Cartesianism of the seventeenth century. P. J. Jouve and T. S. Eliot are typical examples of this ascetic tendency. They are, so to speak, the Jansenists of the age of nihilism. They too, like the logician Pascal, have kept an ambiguous affinity with the main contemporary tradition; they often actually originate from it by conversion (T. S. Eliot, Robert Lowell, Jean Cocteau, P. Claudel, or Max Jacob). From this nihilistic source they often draw a totally negative attitude toward the world, society, and the *moi*—as the Jansenists also did, through the channel of the Stoics and St. Augustine.

A third main group is made up of dissenters from both nihilism and neomediaevalism. Only here are the genuine avant-garde poets of the 1950s to be found. They are breaking away from the now century-old and played-out, symbol-ridden, indirect, often inhuman poetry of nihilism, without falling into a revival of the perhaps obsolete heritage of the Middle Ages.

The poets who, outside of nihilism and neomediaevalism, beyond the fallacy of well-meaning "engagement," and without paying lip service to an unreal actuality, have sought to solve the problem both in their living and in their writing, may be called "seekers of the new reality." They strive after a reality commensurate with the human self alive in the world of here and now. Along such lines modern poetry ventures into a new world of feeling and creation.

Let us rapidly review these three main groups. With Mallarmé, Rimbaud, and Lautréamont, the nihilistic creed triumphs over the upward striving which still survives in Baudelaire's psychodynamics. Poetry becomes a means of exploration of the inner recesses of the *moi*, either by self-analysis ("Ma pensée s'est pensée," Mallarmé), or by the magic of imagination ("Je devins un opéra fabuleux," Rimbaud). Its great discovery is the desolating vision of nothingness. The outcome of the adventure of Igitur, of Rimbaud in *A Season in Hell*, is therefore failure and despair. Lautréamont, obsessed with a wholly evil transcendence, launches into a logically engineered but absurd attack on all creation, in the hope of destroying the monstrous Creator together with his inhuman universe. Rimbaud, lucidly reaching his conclusions, abandons impotent poetry altogether, renounces any claim upon reality in the higher imaginative sense, and cynically plays the sad money-grabbing game of a world which he despises.

Mallarmé, who long before Nietzsche had proclaimed "Le ciel est mort," went furthest in his probing of the "néant" which looms behind objects, images, and verbal configurations. In the midst of a general debacle of reality, he sets up the poetic act itself, the mental operation through which the cosmos' and the psyche's reciprocal voids are made apparent to imagination, as the supreme and only value. Man here becomes word. In the creative act alone, through the poem, he attains re-

ality. This "logolatry" is a tenet of the late romantics, held also by Baudelaire and the whole Parnassian school. It survives in Mallarmé's ultraskeptical disciple Valéry, who in *Mon Faust* shows himself contemptuous even of the omnipotent "néant." Through Hofmannsthal and Stefan George this view made its way into Germany at the turn of the century, and into England a little earlier through Swinburne, Symons, Oscar Wilde, and the early Yeats. It triumphs in Italy with the sumptuous rhetoric of Carducci and d'Annunzio, in the Hispanic world with Rubén Darío and the poetry-worshipping "modernistas," in the United States with Wallace Stevens' cult of the poetic imagination and of creative self-consciousness—with Robert Frost too, in part, when he poses as the pure formalist, the detached and skillful "basket-weaver." Rilke up to his middle period upholds it, witness his 1908 "Requiem für Wolf, Graf von Kalckreuth." It becomes an article of faith for Juan Ramón Jiménez, the Spanish exponent of absolute beauty and of "la poesía desnuda," for Cavafis, the highly polished Alexandrian Greek poet of historical nihilism and irony, for the "Prismatiker" Gottfried Benn in his postexpressionist period. "In the midst of the universal decay of all life-contents," the later Benn sets up a new absolute, "die Transzendenz der schöpferischen Lust," the transcendence of a self-conscious creative joy. "Style is superior to truth," writes Benn after Valéry, "it bears in itself the proof of existence."

> ... Kein Werden,
> du bleibst gebannt und bist
> der Himmel und der Erden
> Formalist.

This is the period of universal aestheticism. The obsession with form and the cult of words, in Mallarmé and his disciples, must not be understood as a neoclassic search for beauty or elegance of expression. That would be a serious misinterpretation of the nihilistic motivation which underlies their effort. In Mallarmé the catastrophic experience of outer existence and the even more chilling intuition of the negative, abysmal nature of spiritual reality—the inner discovery of "le néant"—are the main content of intellectual and affective life. The poet is now defined as: "Toi qui sur le néant en sais plus que les morts." This nihilistic content can only be transposed into poems through the mastery of a new, "abyss-oriented" language and of a negative symbolic imagery of strictly private origin. The content of experience is transformed, together with the transmuted traditional language, into a verbal equivalent of nonbeing and silence, which was for Mallarmé the ground of truth. Through the recast structures of an esoteric language and imagery, the nature of life as well as of the self at last appears—the very face of nothingness. "Je la dis transposition," is Mallarmé's operational formula. At the contact of this ultimate nonbeing, the symbolizing vehicle itself, the poem, risks

flattening out, annihilating itself into silence, the icy virgin sheet "que sa blancheur défend." The musician of silence is made mute by meeting with what he evoked: "Aboli bibelot d'inanité sonore." There must end any symbolical transposition!

Such is the danger threatening the descendants of Mallarmé—the belief in the sole reality of the poem is in turn negated by the inner process just described, which makes the poetic act, in the absence of all existential values, contradictory and impossible. This obstacle is inherent, not in the formal exigencies of a strict language as such, but in the nihilistic premises on the basis of which they are formulated. Here lies the inner limitation of modern aestheticism. It can be overcome only by a "change of heart" (as Auden put it), not through technical manipulations of syntax or imagery.

Stefan George's Algabal, the inhuman seeker after the "black flower," the Baudelairean despot of an artificial subterranean palace of metal and stone, where even the trees are of coal, had to die to himself, before George could write *Das Jahr der Seele, Der Freund der Fluren,* or could even conceive the open poetry of *The Star of the Covenant* and *The Third Realm.*

In the direct line of succession of Baudelaire and Mallarmé, we must also range those poets who have considered it their principal mission to state, without recourse to aestheticism, the human condition in a nihilistic age. In this lineage we find the caustic poetry of Thomas Hardy, A. E. Housman, Corbière, Laforgue, and the Eliot of Prufrock, Sweeney, "The Hollow Men," and *The Waste Land.* Before Eliot, A. E. Housman had expressed the disillusionment brought about by the devaluation of both nature and culture in modern England. "In the endless road you tread / there is nothing but the night." In *The Shropshire Lad* total nihilism triumphs. There remains only the doubtful, perishable pride of the *moi.* In such works despair becomes professional, and the purgatorial attitude towards life turns into a compulsive mania. The nihilistic rebellious reaction slashes out savagely at self and at the world. Irony and abuse become standard devices of poetic expression, as in Pound's *Cantos.*

German expressionism may be seen in this light too. For the young Gottfried Benn, one of its earliest leaders, the unfettered expression of the fragmented "spätes Ich," by itself and for itself, becomes the sole aim—as it is for the narcissistic purist Valéry. It reveals itself first in the grotesque, cruel surroundings of a world which, as Baudelaire and Mallarmé already felt, had turned into a gigantic hospital, a "Krebsbaracke." Here one acknowledges as human experiences only crude agony and bodily decay. Expressionism records the debris of a world which falls apart, in a similarly fragmented enumerative language, suggestive of this universal rubble. It also evokes the loneliness of a man

without a universe who, like Chamisso's Peter Schlemihl, runs after the shadow he has sold. England produced, after the exit of the Georgian garden-party poets, the value-blind technicians of imagism, joined also by Eliot in his beginnings. In Germany the same conditions caused at first the hysterics of an often formless and noisy expressionism. A little later, with Trakl, the excess of expressionistic speech effects is toned down, and the despair inherent in being a poet "in dürftiger Zeit" is given a truer, more lyrical and delicate voice, imbued with poignant melancholy.

> Über den weißen Weiher
> Sind die wilden Vögel fortgezogen.
> Am Abend weht von unseren Sternen ein eisiger Wind.
> ("Untergang")

> Hirten begruben die Sonne im kahlen Wald.
> Ein Fischer zog
> In härenem Netz den Mond aus frierendem Weiher.
> ("Ruh und Schweigen")

In this all too quiet universe the windows stare emptily; only silence inhabits them.

> Ein Schweigen in leeren Fenstern wohnt.
> ("Die Ratten")

Trakl initiates us into a spectral, wintry, posthuman world—our own. At about the same time Ungaretti and Saba in Italy and Pierre Reverdy in France, in their terse, antirhetorical, short poems, strike a similar note, though they show more bitterness and less resignation.

In nihilistic aestheticism the theme of human love is either eliminated (Benn) or negated and mocked (Valéry). It is replaced by plain narcissism, or by a bitter Don Juanesque sensuality which consoles the self for "le néant," like opium, dream, and wine (erotic poems of Baudelaire and Mallarmé). Throughout his work Eliot declares human love to be a delusion or a fraud. Rilke uneasily denies its claim to the highest spiritual knowledge. He considers it as an imperfect form of revelation of reality in existence. Professor Henri Peyre has recently pointed out that, in the French novel of the twentieth century, human love has ceased to play the part it held in European literature and sensibility since the early Middle Ages. The same thing is true of the mainstream of the contemporary tradition in verse. The theme of love, when it does occur as a dominant motif in poetry, takes on a new and paradoxical meaning which we will touch upon later. This is a symptom of Western man's increasing sense of isolation: "Personne ne comprend personne," wrote Gustave Flaubert in his *Correspondance*.

The vanishing of reality has to be paid for by the inner destruction of poetry and of human tenderness alike. As Hölderlin prophesied at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the valueless world turns into a shadow, man's heart also perishes:

Seit der gewurzelte
Allentzweiende Haß Götter und Menschen trennt,
Muß, mit Blut sie zu sühnen,
Muß der Liebenden Herz vergehn.

Many twentieth-century poets follow such a line, elaborating on special aspects of the general desolation, introducing an awareness of its social character, for instance through the use of the vernacular (Auden, Pound, Brecht, Queneau, Prévert). But a mere acceptance of the "waste land" atmosphere is in the long run intolerable. There have been strong reactions against it, often rooted, however, in nihilism and doomed to failure. "On ne part pas," said Rimbaud. Just as Rimbaud attempted to escape from nihilism through verbal magic, so the French surrealists had recourse to the unconscious and to mental automatism in order to attain a surreal state of being. This was their open sesame, designed to break the curse of the rational ego, and to metamorphose the everyday drabness of a false "reality" into the permanent miracle of "surreality"—"le merveilleux quotidien." However, automatic writing does not satisfy the starved sensibility. The surrealists identified imagination with existence, and words with things. Paralleling the "logolatry" of the earlier aesthetes, the error of surrealism as a doctrine was to seek in the relationships of the self to *words* the solution of a problem which can be found only in the more basic rapports of the self with the *world*. The earlier identification of word with world, which is the rule in a normal, integrated historical period, is no longer valid for our exploded culture; it is a deluding legacy of the older, self-confident Cartesian "fable du monde" and of philosophical nominalism. This mistake is largely responsible for the failure of the surrealists' attempt to overcome nihilism. Like the cultural terrorists, like Dada, and those convulsive nihilists who end their woes in suicide, madness, drunkenness, or sexual orgies, the surrealists merely succeeded in remaining above or outside the real issues of our times.

More moving are those poets who attempt to overcome their nihilism by turning to the cultural past and to childhood for instruction or relief. "I think continually of those who were truly great," writes Stephen Spender in search of lost roots. One can follow this nostalgic and antiquarian tendency in many American poets, such as Pound, Allen Tate, or J. C. Ransom's "Agrarians." Often these origins are felt to be the poet's own lost paradise of childhood, "le vert paradis des amours enfantines." Rilke too turns in this direction in the first phase of his quest, as do Milosz in his *Symphonies*, the St. John Perse of *Éloges*, the Dylan Thomas of "Fern Hill," Patrice de La Tour du Pin in his admirable first book, *La Quête de Joie*.

Young Rilke began his poetic carer in the wake of mid-nineteenth-century *Weltschmerz*, as represented by the sentimental worst of Heine.

In his first book of verse, *Leben und Lieder* (1897), there is a poem beginning with the line:

Ich möchte gern im Frühling sterben...

This is the only line of these early *Lieder* preserved by Rilke in his later poems. However, he changed one word in the line, and this word, to parody Frost, "made all the difference":

Ich möchte *nicht* im Frühling sterben.

In this change, a deep metamorphosis of Rilke's sensibility, of his basic attitude towards existence and the world, is significantly announced. It was to lead the nihilistically obsessed Rilke of *Malte Laurids Brigge* and *Das Buch der Armut und des Todes* to the jubilant affirmation of his later work: "Hiersein ist herrlich."

In this redemptory process, the "return to childhood" played a significant part. It served as a bridge leading Rilke back towards the discovery of reality in *this* world. Where other, younger poets, like Karl von Kalckreuth, sought in death their liberation from the shackles of an alien world and of a confused, constricting self, Rilke found in two endeavors the beginning of his long road out of nihilism—the hard, constant toil of poetic creation taught him by Rodin, and the nostalgia for his childhood.

Nostalgia is the exiled spirit's longing for a livable world, which the soul remembers from its actual childhood or from that vision of the Golden Age so deeply engrained in us, rooted in our ineradicable instinct for bliss, the "fatalité du bonheur" Rimbaud poignantly recalled in the midst of his *Season in Hell.* Nostalgia therefore precedes any of the various efforts of active sensibility to break out of the current "waste land." It forces the self to take stock of its situation and of the world's, in the light of those relations between self and things which once must have existed in the blissful springtime of life, and which should at last come true again in a new, more mature, and conscious way.

Nostalgia is a reflection on failure in the present life; one regrets only out of absence, out of "ennui." It leads back to the freedom of our origins. Thereby it opens the road to salvation—either into the future, as with the older Rilke ("Du mußt dein Leben ändern"), or backwards into recapture of time past and eternity through a creative enshrinement of the self in a higher reality of recovered and actualized memories. The latter process is largely at work in Baudelaire, in Proust, in the beautiful later verse of Oscar de Lubics-Milosz, the greatest contemporary elegiac poet in the French language.

Clearly the Rilke of "Der Ölbaumgarten," which combines Jean-Paul Richter's apocalyptic atheism with Vigny's sense of abandonment, was aware of the nihilistic view of existence in the first years of this century.

Like Eliot, but twenty years before *The Waste Land*, Rilke conveys powerfully the feeling of unreality of all his surroundings, particularly of industrial, urban slums ("Die großen Städte sind nicht wahr"). In this weird, ghostlike world, human consciousness itself is sensed as alien and artificial. The poet's self, as Professor Victor Lange writes, is confronted, not with genuine live beings, but with *Figuren*, geometric figures evolving in a "space of abstracted dimensions—puppet, angel, bird, bat, gazelle, or acrobat," which are "the negative counter-images of the human being"; he gazes mostly at "the course of objects such as a sling, a ball, a swing, or a throw, that plot, in their movement, the curve of non-human time-space relationships." And yet there was once childhood, perhaps cruel, but true and intimate. Through its mediation the later Rilke will be able to make a new alliance with real space, real beings, beyond all agony. In a short poem from the "Nachlaß," written in Paris in 1925, Rilke pathetically expresses his passion for unity and "intercommunication" with the whole of creation:

> Ach, nicht getrennt sein,
> nicht durch so wenig Wandung
> ausgeschlossen vom Sternen-Maß.
> Innres, was ist's?
> Wenn nicht gesteigerter Himmel,
> durchworfen mit Vögeln und tief
> von Winden der Heimkehr.

In his last period Rilke did return from exile:

> Hier sei uns alles Heimat: auch die Not.
> Wer wagt, was uns geschieht, zu unterscheiden?

In the poems of these years Rilke found his "Heimat"; beyond nihilism, "Jenseits des Eises, des Nordens, des Todes, unser Leben, unser Glück." What in Nietzsche remained a nostalgia, a broken promise, Rilke slowly, painfully achieved, not without many relapses into doubt and despair. Everything now is given in excess, existence means overabundance, even our losses are treasures:

> Auch noch Verlieren ist unser.
>
> Alles atmet und dankt.
> O ihr Note der Nacht,
> wie ihr spurlos versankt.

Ten years earlier, on the eve of World War I, he had had an intimation of his spiritual itinerary:

> Es winkt zu Fühlung fast aus allen Dingen ...
> Durch alle Wesen reicht der eine Raum:
> Weltinnenraum. Die Vögel fliegen still
> durch uns hindurch.

Of course, this experiencing of a single spiritual and cosmic space, "Weltinnenraum," this vision of the outer birds flying silently through

ourselves, had to be paid for in the painful effort of self-surrender, and in loneliness. But in the end Rilke was able to leave us, in a poem like "Alle die Stimmen der Bäche," another message proclaiming the kinship of divine reality, the human self, the concrete world, and their fusion in the fulfillment of the poem.

Alle die Stimmen der Bäche,
jeden Tropfen der Grotte,
bebend mit Armen voll Schwäche
geb ich sie wieder dem Gotte

und wir feiern den Kreis...

Oh, ich weiß, ich begreife
Wesen und Wandel der Namen;
in dem Innern der Reife
ruht der ursprüngliche Samen,

nur unendlich vermehrt.

Daß es ein Göttliches binde,
hebt sich das Wort zur Beschwörung,
aber, statt das es schwinde,
steht es im Glühn der Erhörung

siegend und unversehrt.

Rilke, in his latter period, can no longer be viewed in the framework of modern existential nihilism from which he, like George, emerged. He is one of the first to have glimpsed joy near the center of the Kingdom of Lamentation, where our death-in-life is endlessly pursued.

Doch der Tote muß fort, und schweigend bringt
ihn die ältere
Klage bis an die Talschlucht,
wo es schimmert im Mondschein:
die Quelle der Freude. In Ehrfurcht
nennt sie sie, sagt: "Bei den Menschen
ist sie ein tragender Strom."
(*Duineser Elegien*, X)

And the last lines of the elegy compare the dead to "the catkins hanging from empty hazels," or to "the rain that falls on the dark earth in the early Spring":

Und wir, die an steigendes Glück
denken, empfänden die Rührung,
die uns beinah bestürtzt,
wenn ein Glückliches fällt.

Other modern poets, also stemming from nihilism, attempted to stay or overcome its curse by various exorcisms—private myth making, occultism, search for mystical experiences or for hallucinations in the manner of Henri Michaux, magic and alchemy, a modified version of the Provençal cult of love. Yeats at his beginnings had a clear conscious-

ness of the chaotic state of European civilization. He wrote in 1897: "A conviction that the world was now but a bundle of fragments possessed me without ceasing." Seeking a frame into which he could fit the fragments of his private experience, he tried to create an eclectic system of myths and symbols, "an infallible church of poetic tradition," in which Neoplatonic elements, magic formulae, and Irish fairy tales uneasily merged. The early Yeats is not unlike Patrice de la Tour du Pin, who was also trying to syncretize legendary with Christian mystical motifs in the unwieldy ensemble of his *Somme de poésie*. The "Jeu du seul," solipsism, and obscurity are the pitfalls awaiting such private myths. Yeats is not intrinsically committed to his myths, magic, or pseudo-mystical visions or even to the Irish folklore he uses. He is a sorcerer without faith, a nihilistic magic-making artist. Like Stefan George, Valéry, and Benn, the later Yeats in "The Tower" and "The Winding Stair" reaches the conception of a timeless, ultimate world of art and artifice, equivalent to death itself, the residence of the "pure unaging intellect"—Byzantium, the city of antinature and "golden handiwork." However, there is in the complex evolution of Yeats yet another strain, away from private mythological syncretisms and an inhuman Byzantium, towards immediate experience, plain statement of existence and being. It is in this third, ontological, tendency, that Yeats belongs in part to postnihilistic poetry, and acts as a seminal force in the minds of the mounting generation of poets.

Often, among the twentieth-century exorcisers of "le néant," the worship of a human love is coupled with hermeticism or cabbalistic speculation. Eluard who, while not an occultist, shared some of the occultists' fundamental attitudes through his association with surrealism and his belief in "le merveilleux," states these connections between the beloved, the world, and the words in many of his poems, for instance in "L'Amour la Poésie":

> Il fallait bien qu'un visage
> Réponde à tous les noms du monde.

The joining of these two title words, love and poetry, is very significant. Here love and poetry, like imagination, magic making, drunkenness, dream, lust, sleep, or orgiastic violence for other poets, have an equivalent function in the abyss-conscious modern sensibility. In a basically groundless existence, the poem and the object of sensuous love are the only true appearance of reality left. But they do not stand, like Maurice Scève's Délie, "object de plus haulte vertu," as guides, messengers, intermediaries between the searching poet and his spiritual goal. Unlike Dante's lady, the modern Beatrice leads her lover not to Paradise but to the grave. As Richard Exner so penetratingly remarks in his essay on the German lyrics of Yvan Goll, the woman-idol momentarily screens the gaping void from the poet's eye. She interposes herself between

modern man and his *Angst*, his anguish of nothingness and open-eyed death (for here, as Hölderlin already saw, "Leben ist Tod, und Tod ist auch ein Leben"). Exner writes in connection with Yvan Goll's love theme: "And that too was no homeland: only throwing a disguise over the abyss, 'ein Sich den Abgrund verstellen lassen' . . . The love is only infinite because the chasm it must cover up is infinite." This purpose of the modern Eros, "throwing a disguise over the abyss," also defines Mallarmé's attempt *as a poet*. But silence is bound to triumph over both love and poetry. The "Staubbaum," the tree of dust, is the last image in Goll's posthumous work. This is the sad, inescapable moral of nihilistic world feeling. It is not accidental that Goll created the only genuine mythical character of the age, besides Charlie Chaplin and Eliot's more abstract "hollow men." His "Jean sans Terre" presents us with the essential features of modern man as the exile from reality. He is not an anonymous or obscure symbol, but a tragicomic presence—our own.

The last form which "throwing a disguise over the abyss" has taken in modern Western poetry is political commitment. However, because of the negative rebellious attitude from which such "engagements" derive in the modern consciousness, this vein is poetically successful only in a negative and therefore still nihilistic sense, as sharp satire and parody. Except for the war-inspired poetry of collective catastrophe of an Aragon, an Eluard, a Pierre Emmanuel, a Dylan Thomas, an Auden, poetry of positive "commitment" in the West remains on the level of poorly versified propaganda. The better poets, such as Bertolt Brecht, Pound, Auden, Prévert, satirize the old fake values, reveal the hypocrisy of a dying but still obstinate world order, by exposing its linguistic falsities, those sure symptoms of decay, as well as its shocking immorality. Theirs, like Voltaire's in *Candide* and Jarry's in *Ubu-Roi*, is a negative, inverted lyricism of dry sneers or of coldly exhibited monstrosities. It aims at violating sensibility in order to provoke both rebellion and laughter at the sight of an obdurate, evil, already corpselike society. Only thus can such poets follow their political line while remaining true to the inner exigencies of their art.

As Jean Rousselot put it, the extremity of nihilistic revolt in poetry is "l'anti-poésie," previously reserved only for the bourgeois and the Philistines themselves. Of all French contemporary "anti-poètes" and "a-poètes," Raymond Queneau is the recognized elder, whose main intent it has been, behind his rollicking verbal antics, "de susurrer plaintif la chanson du néant." Mallarmé here ends up in a Parisian night club where Queneau's lyrics from *Si tu t'imagines* are sung by the fashionable existentialistic zoot-suiters with their American convertibles waiting along the rainy trottoirs. Out of an excessive love for and despair of "l'impossible pureté," poetry itself is junked as treacherous. Here again, we find nihilistic man, in quest of outer salvation, not inner

transformation, asking of art that which signifies the death of art, the rupture of the balance between the inner being of things and of the self, without which poetry as an art cannot survive. It is in this sense that we must interpret the attitude of a Georges Bataille and his paradoxical book, *Haine de la poésie*. The surrealists sacrifice mere art and poetry in their search for a higher state of being, "la surréalité." The "anti-poètes" and "a-poètes" mock and destroy poetry out of despair, because its formal patterns and metaphors cannot satisfy their devouring negative instincts. For some of them poetry as a mere art is not real enough. For others, its modest claims to relative, "aesthetic," valuation is a scandal or a farce, in view of the impossibility of any values. The surrealists, aiming at a superhuman state, demand too much from poetry. The Dadaists and their heirs, the "anti-poètes," see in it too little to let it survive. Zealots wreck any earthly achievement because they lack the redeeming sense of "la mesure humaine."

The second main group to consider in this rapid inquiry into the substance and evolution of modern poetry is the antinihilistic, neomediaeval Christian group. It retreats from a crumbling liberal-skeptical line to the earlier, long since forsaken fortress of faith. While one may broadly define it as an historically regressive tendency, it is far from presenting a unified front. It ranges from the transcendentally oriented, world-hating faith of T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*, to the jubilant world-embracing tones of Claudel's *Magnificat* and Pierre Emmanuel's all too faithful reconstruction of the Tower of Babel. Its formal efforts stretch from the repetitious Alexandrine litanies of Péguy to the ascetic rigor of the best P. J. Jouve and of the later Eliot, for whom "the poetry does not matter."

One of the predecessors of this group is Hopkins, a particularly fascinating antecedent, partly because of his personal conflict, and partly because of his more universal significance in the evolution of modern verse. Hopkins faced an insoluble problem; he wanted to be a Christian ascetic, yet he was a poet, i.e., a sensuous man. Although neither of these two impulses implied a negative feeling towards existence, they combatted each other nonetheless. While Hopkins the Jesuit tended towards an unworldly transcendentalism, Hopkins the poet was strongly drawn towards the world. He discovered both in his religion and in his senses an exhilarating experience of being. Out of this dual vision were born the most important elements of his poetics—the notion of sprung rhythm, a kind of metrical dialectics through which his double allegiance could be contrapuntally manifested, and the notion of *inscape*, "that inner unity and design which corresponds to the uniqueness, the actuality of the experience expressed." Hopkins wrote to Bridges: "It is the virtue of design, pattern or *inscape*, to be *distinctive* . . ." The achievement of inscape is in Hopkins the manifestation of the triumph of the

sensory over the abstracting, ascetic self. The latter is temporarily subdued, integrated in the unique sensuous fabric of the poem. As a creator of inscape, of a concretely structured, reality-filled poetry of nature, Hopkins is more in line with Walt Whitman than with Catholic asceticism. He writes in another of his letters to Bridges: "I always knew in my heart Walt Whitman's mind to be more like my own than any other man's living. As he is a very great scoundrel, this is not a pleasant confession" (p. 155). Both as a Christian believer, and as a Whitmanian temperament, Hopkins is at the antipodes of that modern nihilism which is present in his contemporary, Mallarmé. Yet, linguistically speaking, Hopkins found himself confronted with problems not unlike those Mallarmé had to solve, and answered these difficulties in an almost Mallarmean fashion. His aim was to express, not "le néant," but a revelation of the fullness of being in either Christ or nature. To this end Hopkins had to recast the worn-out poetic idiom of decaying Victorianism. This obligation to purify and revive the language of the tribe made him a kind of Mallarmé in reverse. Hopkins, too, was assailed by the old problem of how to be a poet in unpropitious times, burdened with a useless verbal heritage. He felt compelled to regenerate things and their words, in order to turn them into a worthy chalice of the immanent divine presence. His task was to reinvent the Eucharist, to make the miracle of transubstantiation possible again with Victorian bread and wine. To this end, he undertook a real transfiguration of language itself, its vocabulary, syntax, rhythms, and imaginal content. The quality of inscape is the result of the successful metamorphosis of mere shadow words into real natural presences.

Jacques Maritain, in *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, writes of the group under consideration: "The option for the reality of the Absolute taught it [modern poetry] either its own evangelic affinities, or the experiences of the presence of God and the wounds of the Redeemer, or that contemplative knowledge of the soul and the world. The inner struggles and ventures of Francis Thompson and Hopkins, Verlaine and Max Jacob, Milosz and Léon Bloy, Eliot, Claudel and Péguy, are also an essential part of the spiritual experience of modern poetry" (pp. 181-182). For the critic or historian, the central problem which arises in studying the neo-Christian group concerns the validity of the "option" itself, in the specific religious framework where it occurs. The fact that this group includes some of the very greatest poets of the French and English language in the twentieth century does not do away with this crucial question. To what extent the choice of a Christian revival in the direction of Pascal and Jansenist Augustinianism is compatible with the real situation of the "spätes Ich" of our times can be determined only through an exhaustive world-historical interrogation which is beyond the scope of this study. Is it possible to "go back" in

spiritual development? And how will the strongly reasserted world hatred of the Christian tradition remedy our ailing sense of reality, a sense originally impaired by the unfolding of Christianity itself and its later, postmediaeval development which shaped the soul of Western man? It is no mere coincidence if many of these Christian poets, like Coventry Patmore in the last century, show towards the political, social, and economic problems of their time either an unrealistic or a completely reactionary attitude. With the exception of Péguy, guilty of socialist heresy, the dominating figures in this group, whether Anglican or Catholic, lean in poetry and elsewhere towards the Middle Ages.

The third and last group of those poets who have struggled and broken with the modern nihilistic tradition seeks to fulfill the Baudelairean "upward striving" without recourse to the mediaeval order. Here again, we find no unity of technique, nor even a distinct spiritual community. But there is a certain unanimity of outlook; against the prevailing apathy and indifference to life, they seek the restoration of the reality function in our sensibility. This can mean only one thing, to establish an immediate relationship with a reality that is present in the world of here and now—a solution eliminated from the start by the Christian Fathers of the fourth century. These poets of immanence are really at the frontier of human sensibility today. Their attempt at a renewed contact with the world is the boldest move in that direction since the breakdown of sacramental Christianity and the ensuing enthronement of the Cartesian *moi*. But this attempt openly challenges our whole past. It contradicts the Stoic and Christian traditions of devaluating the world; it contradicts Cartesian self-sufficiency and romantic solipsism; and it contradicts, finally, post-Nietzschean nihilism, through which both the negated world and the dissolved *moi* had been disposed of, a process Baudelaire foresaw in the preface of his *Fleurs du mal*.

Among the forerunners of this immanent tendency we must place the middle and later Spinozistic Goethe, Walt Whitman, and Victor Hugo, the "homme-océan," the poet whose unifying vision created "La Fin de Satan" and "Dieu" out of the chaos of nature, history, and man's contradictory thought. Here probably is to be found the secret of Hugo's influence on various contemporary poets.

For these masters and for their modern disciples, art for art's sake (i.e., word instead of life) can never do. It is life and the world which count, through which the poetic act acquires its substance as well as its human dignity. We are here at the antipodes of the nihilistic tradition. Professor Erich Heller has noted in recent Western poetry a trend away from aestheticism and self-isolation. As an indication of this new tendency he quotes a line from Eliot's *Four Quartets*: "The poetry does not matter." Eliot must have meant by this statement that only a kind of naked speech directly pointing to absolute transcendence is of

importance. This his later work exalts as the sole answer to modern nihilism. What Professor Heller reads into the quotation is a movement away from formalism and aestheticism, as well as from transcendental spirituality. He interprets it as a positive orientation toward the world of things and toward human life. And this is what the seekers of a new reality are trying to achieve, through many different ways or channels.

Sometimes this effort at establishing contact takes the form of a concrete description of objects, a tendency already visible in the early poems of Francis Jammes and in Rilke's *Dinggedicht*. Thus, Francis Ponge's highly stylized and polished "things," in *Le Parti-pris des choses*, are manifestly devoid of metaphysical purpose or direct human relevance. Yet Ponge is intent on "moralizing the landscape." He tries to construct a truer, more real image of man, through this crisp, sympathetic, creative treatment of what, to bourgeois Philistines, Christian ascetics, Cartesian Stoics, and modern nihilists alike, are mere soulless lumps of matter. Of this objective and yet sensitive, extremely form-conscious tendency Robert Frost and William Carlos Williams are the great American masters. But Williams' sympathy is perhaps more universal, free from any aestheticism; it embraces the social as well as the natural or merely personal world.

Among such poets as Williams, Eluard, René Char, the later Dylan Thomas, the aim is more clearly stated than in Ponge—namely, to recapture for human sensibility its evidence of real existence amidst a real, significant world. Rilke's last period is devoted to the celebration of "Hiersein," of being in this world, the place where even dreams occur, and of whose substance dreams are woven. Before Eluard, Apollinaire was among French poets the guide and initiator to this liberation from nihilism, the restorer of the sense of ubiquity, of lucid sympathy with all creatures, of the joy and greatnes of life in the heart of its agonies; this supreme sense he calls "ardent Reason":

O Soleil, c'est le temps de la Raison ardente.

Similarly, it was out of Whitman's exuberant affirmation of life and celebration of a new, truly human world, that Hart Crane sprung. Crane's premature and organically unsound myth making was aimed at transforming the drab American urban landscape into a genuine cultural presence. It was perhaps too early, for Crane as for Rilke in the 1920s, to hope for an actual marriage of Faustus and Helena, to celebrate the merely dreamed-of building of the bridge, to take as actual the vision of that unifying link between self and world, in the creation of which Rilke, too, saw the future mission of the poet:

Baue jetzt der unerhörten Brücken
Kühn berechenbaren Bug.

For René Char, the tightly knit elliptical poem is the solid ground on

which the mind achieves this goal. The poem alone mediates the newly found fraternity between earth and man, through which beauty will conquer "toute la place," the entire field in human existence and not, as formerly, be content with the restricted domain of art. In his scheme, the poem as deed will become the link between a freer self and a restored nature. The poetic act itself will regulate the Heraclitean tension between these polar opposites. We can appreciate at this point the artistic affinities, as well as the radical differences of outlook towards man, nature, and poetry, between René Char and the earlier, nihilistically grounded aestheticism.

MacLeish in *Conquistadors*, St. John Perse in *Anabase* and particularly in the cosmic poem *Vents*, undertake the great adventure of conquest of the neglected world of man. But Supervielle is freer from the old aestheticism; with greater familiarity and simplicity than Perse, in his *Fable du monde* he presents the universe to our senses as a vast breathing fellow creature. The later Yeats, in "The Circus Animals' Desertion," dismisses his symbolical menagerie; at last rid of all these useless puppets he resolves:

> I must go down where all the ladders start,
> To the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart.

He will then discover in himself, like a rising sun, the great and simple presence of being:

> I would be ignorant as the dawn,
> That merely stood, rocking the glittering coach
> Above the cloudy shoulders of the horses;
> I would be—for no knowledge is worth a straw—
> Ignorant and wanton as the dawn.

However, in the contemporary literary scene, the Spanish poets have, it seems, come closest to expressing this new ontological experience. This may be attributed to the fact that, unlike French, Italian, or Anglo-American poetry, Hispanic lyricism has never throughout its long history lost contact with its invigorating popular sources and techniques. Whether it be a *culto* baroque poet like Góngora, or refined *modernista* aesthetes like Darío and Jiménez, the genuine Hispanic artist remains close to the elements of the national sensibility and to its folk song, even in a technical, formal sense. The awareness of earth and mountains and suffering man makes the Chilean Pablo Neruda the greatest epic creator since Victor Hugo. He is the singer of man and cosmos locked in the historical struggle for a more abundant life. Like Dylan Thomas, Lorca exhibits a Baudelairean duality; he too senses both "l'horreur de la vie et l'extase de la vie." The plots and structure of his theater rest on this insoluble contradiction. As a true heir to nihilistic disenchantment, Lorca has no illusions about the tragic futility of individual life, love, and death. Even when an Ignacio Sánchez Mejías dies, the greatest bull-

fighter of his age, all his force, elegance, and beauty are flung into oblivion. His soul has "gone into absence."

ALMA AUSENTE

No te conoce el toro ni la higuera,
ni caballos ni hormigas de tu casa.
No te conoce el niño ni la tarde
porque te has muerto para siempre.

Porque te has muerto para siempre,
como todos los muertos de la Tierra,
como todos los muertos que se olvidan
en un montón de perros apagados.

But in his "Ode to Walt Whitman" Lorca asks: "Which perfect voice shall speak the wheat field's truth?" And in the last lines of this ode Lorca prophesies the coming of a black child "announcing to the white men of gold the advent of the reign of the ear of corn."

While Lorca's violent plays, lyrics, and *romances* are rooted in his native Andalusian soil, a more universal, if sometimes intellectualizing idiom is found in the poems of Antonio Machado and Jorge Guillén. In these poets we find the most complete statement of a reborn sense of reality. For Machado the experiencing of the self through the medium of earthly existence is, as for Unamuno in "El Cristo de Velázquez," the main concern. In him there occurs a "palpitation," a constant oscillation between his subjectivity and his Castilian surroundings, the "hermosa tierra de España." Unity and reality are found in this very palpitation, in the inner *durée* of each heartbeat, which means also our suffering and death.

Como otra vez, mi atención
está del agua cautiva;
pero del agua en la viva
roca de mi corazón.
(*Nuevas canciones*)

Machado's direct and moving message is one of compassionate acceptance of all existential reality, of courage to live regardless of our tragic condition, beyond hope and despair.

The discovery of the world illuminates the work of Jorge Guillén. In his *Cántico* we find, together with the formal perfection and polish of the French symbolist masters, a content which completely reverses the trend started by the symbolists. Guillén's wholly affirmative content fills the shining forms, dedicated by Mallarmé or Valéry to the glittering reverberation of nothingness, with a jubilant excess of sunlight. In the *Cántico*, we have a testimony of lucid ecstasy before the organic miracle of every dawn and summer day. Conversely, the sense of anguish, night, winter, loneliness, exile, which constitutes the essential theme of modern nihilism, is strangely lacking in this universe of crystallized joy, light, and power:

Es la luz del primer vergel.

In the excess of its solar virtue itself lies perhaps the human limitation of this remarkable work. For exile, night, and winter are indubitable realities that clamor for expression and are not to be silenced in our tragic times by man's dual voice.

From the formal point of view, many of these poets give evidence of an interest in clarity of expression, in neatness of structure; they want to make manifest in their words the luminous evidence of being—this in contrast to the riddlelike symbol-laden constructions of the other tradition. Oracular, allusive hints at the negative transcendence are replaced by direct statement of experience. This immediacy is visible in the very handling of the language, which is always inseparable from the basic intent. These poets tend towards communicability. Their greater simplicity of speech is aimed at genuine "Deutung," designation of the reality which appears—something which had been lacking in the nihilist tradition of Western poetry for over a century. The Mallarmean verbal "transposition" is replaced by "position" of all things and all human feelings, affirmation of a newly recovered sense of reality in relation to the world and to subjectivity itself. The formal (linguistic as well as imaginal) changes are bound to the spiritual motive which prompted them. These poets have heeded Hölderlin's admonition:

Die Seele, der im Leben ihr göttlich Recht
Nicht ward, sie ruht auch drunten im Orkus nicht.

If we look for the true poetic revolutionaries, the deviators from the nihilist orthodoxy today, it is among these most untypical successors of Baudelaire that we shall find them. Their derivation from the common French stem is not effected through the traditional "downward striving," but on the contrary through the positive, ontologically inspired, upward movement described in Baudelaire's "Élévation."

But, whereas the Platonizing Christian Baudelaire conceived of reality and beauty only on the transcendental level of "l'air supérieur," these contemporary poets experience reality as immanent in life itself. The light of Eden, says Guillén, shines on my face, in this very garden: "ante mi faz, en ese jardín." For them the world of earth, time, flesh, and suffering is endowed with the absolute presence of being. There is, historically speaking, this great novelty—they break with Baudelaire's transcendental idealism as well as with his nihilistic orientation. In this way they overcome Baudelaire's dilemma, his tension between the two opposite "postulations" or strivings, around which the whole history of modern poetry revolves. Therefore they open a new era, and launch out into an unpredictable future, not only as practicing poets but primarily as pioneers of human sensibility. Such poets celebrate values which have been silenced in the West since perhaps the time of Parmenides: being,

awareness of being, the miracle of the eternal present and of the living form incarnate. This is Jorge Guillén's "real life":

¡Oh presente sin fin, ahora eterno,
Con frescura continua de rocío,
Y sin saber del mal ni del invierno,
Absoluto en su cámara de estío!
("Anillo")

¡Oh forma presente, suma
Realidad! Contigo triunfo.
Contigo logro soñar
El sueño mejor, el último.
("La vida real")

Brandeis University

THE TRANSFORMATION OF MODERN FICTION

ERICH KAHLER

LAST summer—on August 29, 1954—the *London Observer* published a piece by Sir Harold Nicolson proclaiming that the novel is dead. This statement raised a lively discussion in the following Sunday issues of the *Observer*, an interesting discussion which may very well serve as a point of departure for our investigation. It revealed, even in such eminent minds as Harold Nicolson, Louis MacNeice, Philip Toynbee, and Edwin Muir, a considerable confusion as to the concept, the status, and the role of the novel—valid sentiments based on wrong premises, contended and contested, it appears to me, with wrong arguments.

Sir Harold identifies the novel with fiction pure and simple—"a 'story' containing episodes and characters which, although imaginary, are rendered credible." This genre, according to him, made its appearance as late as 1740, with Richardson's *Pamela* and the *Princesse de Clèves* (which, incidentally, was written more than half a century earlier, in 1678). It is therefore "not a permanent form of literary expression, but a transitory response to certain conditions." These conditions exist in a time "when civilization is not threatened by any grave external or internal upheaval." "It is then," Harold Nicolson concludes, "that a minority of gifted men and women, bored by the prevailing uniformity, create the novel, either as an escape into a more exciting and adventurous world, or as a vehicle for social, religious, or moral propaganda." Today "fact has become so far stranger than fiction that we are losing, not the capacity only, but also the desire, for wonder." Therefore the novel is dead.

The fallacies of this argument are pretty obvious. First of all, it seems to me very doubtful whether there is such a thing as a permanent form of literary expression, unless we take into account only the most superficial characteristics. If we are supposed to subsume Anacreontic lyrics and Sapphic odes under the same category as T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* and E. E. Cummings' poetry, or, for that matter, Mallarmé's verse, then why not include in Harold Nicolson's art of fiction certain Hellenistic stories, like *Apollonius of Tyre*, and the Renaissance novella and *Amadis de Gaula*—not to speak of *Don Quixote*, Grimmelshausen's *Simplicius Simplicissimus*, or *Manon Lescaut*—all of them written before 1740, all of them perfectly fitting Harold Nicolson's definition, but none of them even mentioned by the *Observer*'s debaters. Last but not least, I would know of hardly any historical period less boring and placid than the one starting in the middle of the eighteenth century, the period

of the French, the American, the industrial revolutions, of the Napoleonic venture and the ensuing European upheavals.

However, it is not in order to refute Sir Harold's thesis that I have mentioned it, but rather because of the grain of truth which it contains. Indeed the novel *is* at a critical point. Let me try to clarify the situation.

If we want to establish a distinction between the modern novel and all previous narrative, we should, so it seems to me, look to the sixteenth century. While up to that time, and still in the Italian novella (the *Novellino*, Sacchetti, Boccaccio, Bandello, Straparola), the incentive and the response to storytelling came from novelty pure and simple, from the report of a singular, curious event, from the anecdote as such, without any general connotation, the chivalry stories, on the other hand, appearing en masse at the end of the Renaissance, were for the first time produced and enjoyed in a more comprehensive sense—they were produced and enjoyed not only because of the wondrous individual happenings as such, but for the sake of the extraordinary, adventurous life that these happenings implied, in contrast with the growing regularity of the new urban civilization and the bureaucratic rule of the territorial state. It is from this initial opposition between two forms and types of society, between the burgher, restricted by his new collective order and morality, and the knight, roving through his wild and colorful world of heroic love and fantastic perils—it is from this initial tension that the romantic situation arises, a situation in which the story provides the burgher with an imaginary escape from everyday normality and a vicarious enjoyment of his suppressed urges. The chivalry story is succeeded by the rogue story, the horror story, the exotic story, and finally our modern mystery story—the adventure of our modern civilization being crime. All these narratives serve the same purpose of escape and vicarious enjoyment; and, the strangeness of our present factual life notwithstanding, the consumption of detective stories does not seem to have decreased considerably in recent times.

Thus, the chivalry story, even in its lowest, commercialized products and in its very exploitation of inhibited drives, related something more than the individual happening; it conveyed a general climate and atmosphere, a life experience as opposed to current reality, and thereby, implicitly, an at least semiconscious notion of *change* in human conditions —and, eventually, a growing awareness that there is such a thing as an epochal human condition, moral and social. This awareness we find patently expressed in the first work of art that we may call a modern novel, in the *Don Quixote*.

So what seems to me to set the novel apart from all previous narrative is this important feature: that the novel carries in the individual story a more than individual significance; that it shows, by means of an individual story, a general condition of the human being. In other words,

what turns a story from a mere anecdote into a novel is *its symbolic quality.*

This symbolic quality, the coincidence of an individual story with a general human significance, pervades the whole great tradition of the European and American novel from the sixteenth to the end of the nineteenth century, and even later: from *Don Quixote* and *Simplicius Simplicissimus* through the high period of the English novel, Rousseau and Goethe's *Werther*, Choderlos de Laclos and the French romanticists, to Stendhal, Balzac, Dickens, Flaubert, Jane Austen, Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and E. M. Forster, to Jean Paul and Gottfried Keller, to the great Russians and Scandinavians, to *Moby Dick* and *The Scarlet Letter.*

All the great novels of this period recount individual stories, happenings and relationships within the orbit of individual life; all of them contain invented, imaginary characters and events, all of them are accordingly "fiction," much more so than earlier narratives, which frequently reported real episodes. Since a truly artistic novel expresses, through the medium of the individual story, a matter of general human import, it is *bound* to be fiction; the author must thoughtfully select characters and circumstances apt to elucidate most clearly and impressively the human condition of his period. Fiction is closely tied up with the symbolic validity and capacity of an individual story, a story of happenings and relationships within the scope of individual life.

Fiction had its great moment in the period when individual relations governed the life of men, or better, when crucial world affairs depended entirely or mainly on decisions of individuals, or relations between individuals—absolute monarchs, princes, statesmen, individual entrepreneurs—and that is just the period from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. In this period, when vital happenings were happenings to and between individuals, and, accordingly, when individual characters and relations were representative of world affairs—in this period the exploration of individual characters and destinies was a matter of prime importance and had a most intense symbolic value; and the same is true in the visual arts, where this is precisely the great period of the portrait: from Clouet, Titian, Dürer, Holbein, Velásquez through the Dutch and English portraitists up to the French impressionists.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, however, a fundamental change occurred in the social and psychic condition of man. Industrialization and mass production, technicalization, scientification, and bureaucratization of life processes, democratization—or let us be more modest and say politicalization—of the masses, all this set in on a grand scale and, as a result, the life of man, the condition of man, was less and less determined by individual personalities and decisions, and came increasingly to depend on huge collective and technological processes. Crucial

events now take place in a supra-individual sphere, and the individual with his individual destiny is either reduced to a purely singular, private, irrelevant oddity, hence without much representative, that is, symbolic value; or, as far as he *is* representative, he immediately appears as a typified, scientifically classified, statistical case. His personal story has become a case history.

Now all this has had the deepest effects on the artistic forms. The artist, being a seismograph (to use a dictum of Hugo von Hofmannsthal), presensing, prefiguring potential realities, and inherently concerned with the exploration of the human condition—the artist registered the changing situation even before it became generally apparent; he registered it even technically, in the development of his sensibility and of his modes of expression. The novel broadened its range in divers directions; it expanded in the width of the social sphere and in the depth of the psychic sphere. Zola's experimental novels and Tolstoy's *War and Peace* both show in their different ways the collectivistic widening of the narrative. (The trend started even earlier, in Balzac's and Dickens' sociological digressions.) Both, Zola in his attempt to make the novel scientific and Tolstoy in his unfolding of the historic panorama of a gigantic national event and illuminating all its social strata—both deal no longer so much with individual destinies per se as with the interrelation and interdependence between individual and collective happenings. When we compare Stendhal's treatment of the Napoleonic wars in his *Chartreuse de Parme* (1839) with that of Tolstoy in *War and Peace* (1866), we notice the growing importance which social groups have assumed in Tolstoy's great novel.

At the turn of the century and after, stories recounting the career of a family, particularly the decline of a family, like Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* and Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga*, came into fashion. In our days, this collectivizing trend has produced a whole new genre which could be called *novelistic reportage*, presenting, through a novelistic medium, accounts of catastrophes, collective events, and milieus, such as Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* and James Jones's *From Here to Eternity* in America, David Rousset's *Les Jours de notre mort* and Marcel Aymé's *Uranus* in France, Plievier's *Stalingrad* and Bruno Werner's *Galeere* in Germany, Silone's *Fontamara* in Italy.

The same tendency manifests itself from the reverse angle in stories relating the loneliness and forsakenness of the individual amidst, or his inescapable subjection to, our mercilessly overpowering group standards: stories like J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* and the same author's *Nine Stories*, Saul Bellow's *Dangling Man*, Richard Wright's *Outsider*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*; others probing the individual's behavior in extreme, pathological situations—drunkenness (Charles Jackson's *Lost Weekend*), growing blind (Walter Jens'

Der Blinde), amnesia (Werner Warsinsky's *Kimmerische Fahrt*)—or seeking out bizarre and mostly torturing psychic situations, as Julien Green's and Jean Genet's novels, or Jean Stafford's short stories, for instance "The Present" and "Country Love Story." (Tennessee Williams' *Glass Menagerie* and *Streetcar Named Desire*, which deal with similar border cases, show a corresponding trend in the drama.)

Such experiments, however, belong partly in another development of the novel, artistically as well as humanly even more consequential, and to the same degree as the collectivizing trend invalidating the individual story. This is the uncovering of the subterranean zone of the human psyche so as gradually to restrict the domain of the conscious ego and to show the ego under the influence of uncontrolled currents of the unconscious.

We may distinguish different stages of this analytical penetration into the subindividual sphere of the psyche. The first push reached into the depth of the *individual unconscious* and started dissolving the unity and coherence of the psyche into a complexity of complexes, desires, and associative memories. This push may be identified with psychoanalysis in the Freudian sense, which does not mean that it was in all cases tied up with the Freudian movement. Nietzsche as well as William James anticipated certain findings of Freud's, and the great Russians, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, had, long before Freud, plunged into the unconscious without explicitly identifying it. Marcel Proust, who probably had not read Freud when he began writing his *A la recherche du temps perdu*, spoke of his work as "a sequence of novels of the Unconscious." This delving into the individual unconscious gave rise to new novelistic techniques, the "stream of consciousness" technique and the "interior monologue." These techniques, besides breaking through the bottom of our consciousness, on which our psyche had hitherto rested with confidence, effected another break-through of even more far-reaching consequences—they shattered the likewise supposedly solid foundation of chronological time. A new time, the time of inner experience, began to germinate within the time of outer happenings. This new kind of time has no definite structure—the depths into which it expands are practically limitless. It cannot be measured by means of chronological time since, as we all know, a dream of a few minutes may cover the course of a whole lifetime. On the other hand, we have sizable volumes—like Joyce's great epics, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, Thomas Mann's *Lotte in Weimar*, Hermann Broch's *Der Tod des Vergil*—filled with the contents of one or two days. The discovery of the boundlessness of experience has produced a peculiar anxiety or dizziness, a feeling, as Virginia Woolf's Clarissa puts it, "that it is very very dangerous to live even one day."

But this search of the individual unconscious was only the first step

in an ever-deepening reach into the tottering foundations of the human psyche. The next push went even farther down, into what the Swiss psychologist, C. G. Jung, called the *collective unconscious*, the sphere of mythical, "archetypal" recurrences. Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, in one of their many aspects, and Thomas Mann's *Joseph Story* may serve as examples.

A third advance led the novel to the extreme transpersonal borders of the human condition, into the unfathomable zone of plainly human existence. The new experience that prompted this advance, the *existentalist experience*, can be traced much further back than Sartre's, Camus', and Malraux' scrutinies; it made its first appearance at the very beginning of our century, when Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Robert Musil, and Rainer Maria Rilke (in his *Malte Laurids Brigge*) described this disquieting psychic phenomenon.

The most ambitious venture of the modern novel, however, has been the attempt, not only to combine the new social and psychic dimensions of modern man, but, in a highly concentrated effort, to render the whole scenery of our world in its multifarious perspectives and show the position of man within it. Here the individual loses his concrete and unique identity altogether. The individual character and the individual story assume an immediate generality, that is to say, the symbol is transformed into a type or model. There is a crucial difference between the symbol and the type. A *symbol* is derived from below, from the individual who, while remaining thoroughly individual, still implicitly expresses something generally human. A *type* is a model, derived from above, from general categories, classifications, abstractions, which it incorporates, impersonates.

Thus, certain modern novelists, in order to make their story and its protagonists humanly relevant, representative of the present human condition, either resort to typification or to a multiplication and intensification of symbols, a construction and synthesis of manifold symbolic levels. A single symbolic level, a representation through individual, everyday, life-size characters, does not suffice any longer to show the complexities of our human condition. Therefore the author has to create *synthetic figures and plots*, capable of expressing simultaneously different threads and different levels of happening. Hence the overload of symbolic designs carried by such works as Joyce's novels, Gide's *Faux monnayeurs*, Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, Musil's *Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, Broch's *Tod des Vergil*. In such novels there has evolved the multilevel, multistory story.

The last result of this development is the *parable*, a story that from the outset moves on an abstract, rarefied level, lifted out of specific locale, time, and individual characteristics—a story that pictures our human condition in an immediately supra-individual manner, without

losing its human intensity and vividness. Such are the stories of Kafka. (Goethe's *Wahlverwandtschaften* and *Wilhelm Meister* already were parables.)

Stendhal's Julien, Flaubert's Emma Bovary, and Henry James' John Marcher are *symbolic figures.* Sinclair Lewis' Babbitt is a *type.* Joyce's Stephen Daedalus and Leopold Bloom, Thomas Mann's Adrian Leverkühn, Musil's Ulrich, and Elisabeth Langgässer's Lazarus Belfontaine (in the novel *Das unauslöschliche Siegel*) are *synthetic figures.* Kafka's Mr. K. and Samuel Beckett's Molloy are *parabolic figures.*

So if we identify the novel with fiction, then indeed the novel is on the way out. In the most accomplished epical works of our age, what remains of fiction is at best a rudimentary occasion for far-reaching explorations into the human status. Reality, a new reality, keeps invading the novel through various channels, through the unavoidable description of scientific, social, technical processes, through montage, through psychological and pathological scrutiny and divagations into inner experiences of a highly complicated order. Even the novels of that greatest among the living American authors, and one of America's greatest ever, William Faulkner, although still basically fiction, are so overburdened with psychic complexities that the fictional element becomes almost irrelevant.

All this has happened by sheer necessity. It is not due, as many people believe, to a lack of great novelists—the twentieth century abounds with novelistic geniuses. Who would in all seriousness doubt the imagination, the inventiveness, the ability to tell a story in authors like James Joyce, Virgina Woolf, André Gide, Thomas Mann, Franz Kafka? Nor can we put the blame, as Louis MacNeice seems to do, on the novelists' neglect of form—hardly ever before has the concern with form been so paramount as with the great novelists of our age. And this for the very reason that new forms had to be found for new visions to be expressed. Traditional forms are not sacrosanct. They were valid as long and inasmuch as they expressed the reality of their age. Vision is not bound to comply with given forms, but form is the pliable creation of vision.

It was such particular pliability, the faculty to expand and to conform to any range of vision, that made the novel the dominant literary form of the last century. The drama, owing to its many limitations—action, dialogue, immediate sensory visuality, time and space of theatrical performance—is necessarily encumbered in its efforts at reaching into the new dimensions of modern man. Even the film, capable as it is of extending the dramatic into the epical scope and thus combining the qualities of both drama and novel, still retains some of the inherent restrictions of the drama.

But we should not cling to the old terms. New forms, new blends,

new genres begin to assert themselves, conveying the new reality that needs to be revealed. What these forms will be it is hard to predict. I for one believe that a new sphere of even more comprehensive representation will be reached, reflecting, I hope, the want of a truly human community, and that scientific and artistic forms will in some way converge.

Around 1800 the German romanticist, Friedrich Schlegel, anticipated such a development. And just a century ago Flaubert wrote in a letter to Louise Colet, dated April 24, 1852: "Le temps est passé du Beau. L'humanité, quitte à y revenir, n'en a que faire pour le quart d'heure. Plus il ira, plus l'Art sera scientifique, de même que la science deviendra artistique. Tous deux se rejoindront au sommet après s'être séparés à la base. Aucune pensée humaine ne peut prévoir maintenant à quels éblouissants soleils psychiques écloront les œuvres de l'avenir. En attendant, nous sommes dans un corridor plein d'ombre; nous tâtonnons dans les ténèbres. Nous manquons de levier ... De la foule a nous, aucun lien. Tant pis pour la foule, tant pis pour nous surtout."

Cornell University

FORMS OF MODERN DRAMA

JOHN GASSNER

WHOEVER undertakes a brief discussion of the drama must be forgiven if he longs for the relative simplicity of the more autonomous forms of literature. He must take into account the interaction of the literary and theatrical elements in dramatic art. He must acknowledge the contributions of acting and stagecraft to the total effect of the play—an effect that is, moreover, always variable since it is dependent upon the variable character of the performing artists and the audience. The calculus of dramatic criticism must consider how the text of the play is projected and inevitably transmuted by the performance and how the audience responds to it. In considering changes in dramatic style and form—and sensibility is obviously involved in such changes—the total experience is of paramount importance, and this is to be derived from the theater rather than from the printed plays alone.

Concerning that experience, so immense in its totality that even the detailed chronicles of the stage barely do it justice, we may generalize only to a limited extent. We may observe, first of all, that the relationship of the modern drama and the theater has been a fluctuating one. Sometimes, as in the case of Becque, Ibsen, and Tolstoy when he composed *The Power of Darkness* in 1886, the playwright was in advance of the theater, which failed to realize his intentions. The Comédie Française, for example, clung to an antiquated tradition of romantic posturing when it gave its first production of Becque's realistic masterpiece, *La Parisienne*, as late as 1890; and *The Sea-Gull* was staged so disastrously in 1896 before the advent of the Moscow Art Theatre that Chekhov intended to give up playwriting. And Strindberg wrote expressionist drama at least a dozen years before there was any expressionist theater anywhere in Europe. Sometimes, on the contrary, the real pioneers have been the stage directors and designers; Antoine, Stanislavsky, and Gordon Craig were at first well in advance of most of the playwrights of their time. Still, an adjustment between the drama and the stage occurred soon enough in most instances for us to discuss changes in perspective as though they affected playwriting and play production more or less equally and simultaneously.

Notice may also be taken of the relativity of public response. Different audiences in different countries reacted with different degrees of interest and antipathy to such works as *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts*; and the same public that considered plays such as these too venturesome was likely to find them too staid within a decade or two. Even so, however, distinctions can be validly drawn between dominant public attitudes

conducive or not conducive to a coherent view of man's character and situation. It is possible to distinguish Victorian and post-Victorian, nineteenth- and twentieth-century, viewpoints and sensibility in the theater. And there are strong reasons for identifying conspicuous changes in viewpoint or sensibility with fairly well-defined, indeed altogether familiar, transformations of dramatic form and style.

The perspectives of modern drama can be most conveniently considered under the categories of realistic and antirealistic theater. This is the case notwithstanding the overlapping of different types of drama in any country's or any season's theater, and despite the mingling of different styles in the same play, as in Hauptmann's *Hannele* or Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. The realistic and naturalistic drama incorporated one view of reality, and the departures from realistic dramaturgy tended to incorporate or at least reflect a different view. It is not without reason that the realistic drama came to be identified with a positivist and liberal or reformist nineteenth-century *Weltanschauung*, and that the post-naturalistic styles were associated with deterioration of this outlook, with protest or rebellion against its complacencies, and with a general sense of *fin de siècle* and twentieth-century alienation.

A hundred years ago, the realistic drama and theater were still embryonic, but by the end of the last century dramatic realism had become so firmly crystallized that it is still considered the norm in playwriting and play production. Little more than half a century ago, dramatic realism frightened moralists of every denomination. Today the realistic style is more likely to be considered the placid, if not indeed stodgy, method of presenting a situation and idea. The very nature of representational stage art expressed a concrete world picture and centered the individual in it. It is well known that the rise of dramatic realism was associated with the growth of stage illusionism. Action and scenery retreated behind the proscenium arch, becoming framed by the arch until the drama could be looked at as a picture and, finally, as a photograph. The sensibility of the nineteenth century favored every means of strengthening the illusion of environment; and, climaxing the development of realistic scenery, there arose the "fourth-wall" convention, according to which the space enclosed by the proscenium arch was assumed to be a fourth wall separating the actor from the audience. The actor could even turn his back on the audience as if he were merely turning his back to a wall, and furniture might actually be placed against the footlight area. Representationalism became the ruling principle.

The effect on playwriting was inevitable. Prose dialogue became the standard medium of drama, and prose was deprived of all embellishment or rhetoric that could not be realistically motivated. Asides and soliloquies, which had been justifiable conventions in the stylized, nonrealistic theaters of the past, vanished as a convincing mode of providing infor-

mation and expressing tension. Dramatic structure became less and less flexible as the drama became increasingly representational. The natural habitat of playwrights became the parlor, in which the dramatic action consisted of a few episodes. The use of solid settings also discouraged the multiscened playwriting romanticism had brought into vogue a century before. And dramatic action became especially concentrated in the practice of writers concerned with the conflicts of representative individuals involved in a fully explored and discussed situation. Ibsen became celebrated for starting the dramatic action of his realistic plays near their climax. Neoclassic unities returned to the late nineteenth-century theater under a dispensation far from neoclassic.

Significant in this concentration on painstakingly represented reality is the veritable passion for *detheatricalizing* dramatic art that seized the theater. The realistic drama is the least theatrical form of drama developed in the Western theater.

The pioneering realists and naturalists after 1870 drew a sharp distinction between uncontrived and contrived dramaturgy which still influences dramatic criticism and playwriting. They zealously distinguished realistic practice from the pseudo realism of the popular theater even when it was journalistically concerned with "moral" or "social" problems in the manner of Dumas *fils*. They waged war on the so-called "well-made play" technique of Scribe, Dumas, and Sardou on the grounds that intrigue, coincidence, suspenseful situations, and striking exit and curtain lines were inconsistent with truth. "The nearer to the ater the further from life" became the ruling principles. When the naturalists led by Zola actually proposed to reduce dramatic form to a mere slice of life, they were being consistent, though without being particularly intelligent. As Malraux has said, "Artists build theories round what they would like to do, but they do what they can." Even the theater's Zolaist disciples did not actually produce absolute "slices of life." But the *tranche de vie* ideal served as a deterrent to merely contrived dramaturgy and as a reminder that the drama should be brought as close to reality as possible.

Between 1880 and 1890 dramatic realism was fully developed and established on firm foundations of intellectual integrity. The term Ibsenism became synonymous with the modern spirit of inquiry and criticism. And it was, paradoxically, only then that outcries against the modern theater created the impression that Ibsen and his followers were demoralizing society. That impression has not altogether vanished; a more moderate view, that the realists and naturalists reflected a demoralizing influence in society or culture, was recently well-sustained by Joseph Wood Krutch in his Cornell University lectures, *"Modernism" in Modern Drama*.[1] Sociological and psychological presentations of char-

[1] *"Modernism" in Modern Drama: A Definition and an Estimate* (Ithaca, 1953).

acters and their problems did introduce a disturbing relativism into the modern dramatist's picture of man and society, as well as expose much that was distressing about both man and society. It cannot be denied, indeed, that the new realism of Ibsen, Strindberg, and Shaw did represent a corrosion of traditional certainties.

We should nevertheless refrain from confusing an unstable society with an anarchic one, and a state of flux with a state of disintegration. The new realism did not express a sense of disaster or even disorientation. Its tone was confident; its style, fundamentally lucid and consistent; its form, firm and distinct. And it has been, of course, a postulate of the liberal dispensation that it is possible to question or even destroy a convention without precisely exploding the world.

A large aesthetic problem did arise in connection with the new antiheroic view of man's capacities and condition. High tragedy became rare. When tragic art appeared at all without the imitativeness of an *Elizabeth the Queen* or *Mary of Scotland*, it generally manifested itself in a mixed, adulterated form. The tragic sense became diminished by a sense of stalemate or attrition and by an interpretation of failure in terms of social or psychopathological causation. When the doctrine of determinism by nature or environment became fashionable, fate was robbed of its time-honored mystery and man of his traditional eminence.

High tragedy, however, is not the whole of any vital dramatic enterprise, and the same deflationary sensibility which weakened tragic art favored the development of other, intermediate, forms of drama. We may observe this development in a modern sort of tragicomedy or "dark" comedy, with as wide a range as that spanned by *Uncle Vanya* and *Juno and the Paycock*; in psychological drama, as exemplified by the realistic plays of Strindberg or by *A Streetcar Named Desire*, where we encounter a mélange of tragedy and pathology; in "group" drama such as *The Plough and the Stars*; and, mainly perhaps, in drama of discussion or the so-called play of ideas. The realistic sensibility of the modern theater gave rise to a drama of the plateaus and valleys where a good deal of the destiny of men and society happens to be enacted.

Realism made the individual dimensional and substantial even while diminishing his stature, and dramatized his environment and milieu in the very process of challenging conventional beliefs and values. Among the major realists only Strindberg actually hewed close with some regularity to naturalistic determinism—this in his treatment of the irrationalism of sexuality and the sex duel. But even his obsessed characters have too much vitality and individuality to be considered puppets. They also discuss their problems rather analytically, often very cogently. Ibsen, the most influential realist, actually made a cult of self-expression; and his greatest disciple was Shaw, who made volition the very cornerstone of his Lamarckian evolutionary doctrine. Both Ibsen and Shaw, indeed,

had an abiding faith in the extraordinary individual. Ibsen, as Krutch has noted, "never shifts the burden of responsibility from the individual to 'social conditions' or economic pressures."[2] That later realists did shift the burden merely exemplifies the transformation of dramatic realism into an instrument of special pleading which came into vogue precisely at the time when antirealistic and antinaturalistic styles were most strongly challenged by new styles ranging from expressionism to so-called epic theater. The morally responsible individual's potentialities and defects are the paramount subject of Ibsenism; and that this is the case is still understood by a latter-day Ibsen disciple such as Arthur Miller, although his ambivalence is obvious when he fails to make up his mind in *Death of a Salesman* whether Willy Loman or society is responsible for Loman's failure.[3] As for Shaw, it is generally recognized today that neither his Marxian views nor his Fabian activities deterred him from an ardent pursuit of the singular hero, if not indeed the superman, as political leader, manufacturer, artist, and saint in play after play written between *Man and Superman* and *Saint Joan*.

Not even the naturalist dogma of biological and social determinism could entirely banish the modern theater's inclination to concentrate on individual situations and on characters shown in the round, as long as the playwrights refrained from symbolist, expressionist, or other modes of formalist stylization; for both realistic playwriting and performance were modes of endowing the stage character with reality. The individual and his world retained some rationality, consistency, and dimension even in such depressing naturalist dramas as Hauptmann's *Drayman Henschel* and Gorky's *Lower Depths*. In one respect, indeed, realism and naturalism actually enlarged the theater's humanist orientation; for modern realism added individuality and attributed dignity to commoners to whom the older drama had generally afforded only secondary and comic roles.

Significantly, let me add, the naturalist was not infrequently sustained by a view that was fundamentally optimistic. Yes, society was in a turmoil or was undergoing a process of transformation, but the direction of the change held promise of improvement. Many of the characters in Hauptmann's first and callow naturalistic play, *Vor Sonnenaufgang*, are little better than brutes; but the concern and decision of Hauptmann's hero, Alfred Loth, based upon the dread of hereditary alcoholism, exemplifies a belief in the promise of eugenics. Although the

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[3] I also find some ambivalence concerning individual and social responsibility in *Ghosts*, since Ibsen makes it plain that Mrs. Alving was conditioned by a "Victorian" education and later influenced by the views of the middle-class "Victorian" community exemplified by Parson Manders. But Ibsen does not allow her to beg the question of personal responsibility and brings her to a climactic rejection of the conventional values she had once accepted. Ibsen gave increasingly more weight to individual responsibility in the plays he wrote after *Ghosts*.

machine-wrecking mob of *The Weavers* is thoroughly conditioned by economics and is blindly destructive, its conduct affirms one of the "four freedoms"—the freedom from want. This affirmation, along with an augury of social justice, was obviously foremost in the reaction of the Deutsches Theater gallery audience at the première when the Social Democrat August Bebel led it in cheering the play and in singing stanzas of the weavers' song, "Bloody Justice." The affirmative view of *The Lower Depths* is memorable enough to be quoted. Satine attributes the failure of the would-be paraclete Luka to the fact that the well-intentioned pilgrim lied to the derelicts in the depths. "But," he concludes, "the man who is strong, who is his own master, who is free and does not have to suck his neighbors' blood—he needs no lies. Truth is the religion of the free man."[4] It is instructive to observe the contrasting negativism present in important social dramas of the expressionist movement, such as Toller's *Hinkemann* and Werfel's *Bocksgesang*—or, for that matter, present in O'Neill's "lower depths" naturalist-symbolist drama, *The Iceman Cometh*, written in 1939 when naturalism no longer possessed a viable career in the theater.

Still, as previously noted, there were inherent limitations and contradictions in this essentially bourgeois classicism known as realism. It tended to become narrow, flat, and commonplace. It contradicted the very nature of dramatic art with its antitheatrical bias. And, above all, this classicism began to lose its social and intellectual basis in Western civilization. Inevitably, one antirealistic movement after another arose to offer a substitute dispensation. The history of the theater since 1890 is mainly a history of these movements, of their promises and failures, and of the interest they engendered and the resistance they met. In each case we encounter some special view of reality as well as some special concept of dramatic art; the two parallel and sustain each other.

Realism and even naturalism survived, it is true, in pristine and debased forms. They owe their survival to the present day partly to the failure of our century to develop a more generally satisfying dramatic form for exhibiting and exposing contemporary reality with some plausibility or recognizable particularity, and partly to the adaptability of the realistic and naturalistic styles. Program-making modernists have, in fact, invariably minimized the effectiveness with which realism managed to combine with folk speech to produce a naturalistic poetry—in the theater of Synge and O'Casey, for example. And the modernists have also overlooked the many ways in which realistic playwriting from Ibsen's day to our own has been able to soften the hard outlines of argument, to avoid naturalistic clutter and utilize "selective realism" as a method, and to make discreet use of atmospheric effects and sym-

[4] John Gassner, ed., *A Treasury of the Theatre: From Henrick Ibsen to Arthur Miller* (New York, 1951), p. 252.

bolism of the kind Ibsen was the first to employ in *The Wild Duck, Rosmersholm,* and *John Gabriel Borkman.* Nevertheless, the progress of dramatic art since the 1890s has been largely identified with the antirealistic schools of theater, while realism has been continually scorned and dismissed as an outmoded style.

A *fin de siècle* sensibility marked by aesthetic flight characterized the first of the antirealistic movements. A twilight drama of shadows and symbols was introduced into the theater by Maeterlinck and his adherents. Flight from the realists' world of social and intellectual conflict, if not indeed from all worldliness, appeared in plays with mediaeval backgrounds such as Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann* and the celebrated Max Reinhardt spectacle, *The Miracle.* And, finally, when symbolism was accommodated to "show business," it resulted in the composition of fairy-world drama in the manner of *Peter Pan* and *The Blue Bird.* The exacting adult world of an Ibsen, a Strindberg, or a Shaw made way for the world of the child and the dreamer.

The Aristotelian conception of drama as the imitation of an action was not actually challenged by realists and naturalists, despite their strenuous war against mindless melodramas and specious plays of intrigue. But both the program and practice of symbolism tended to reject the primacy of action in the "symbolist" world they considered more real than workaday reality because "inner experience" was allegedly suggestive of profound absolutes or mysterious universals. Significant are Maeterlinck's and Andreyev's theories of so-called static drama. For the former, writing in 1896, the ideal drama was to be found in the mind of an old man sitting in his armchair at night "giving unconscious ear to all the eternal laws that reign about his house . . . submitting with bent head to the presence of his soul and his destiny." For Maeterlinck, this notably inactive character represented "a deeper, more human, and more universal life" than the usual characters of the drama. And Andreyev, writing *A Letter on the Theatre* eighteen years later, ironically enough, at the beginning of World War I, declared that the true modern hero represented "human thought." "Life," wrote Andreyev, disregarding the machine age, "has gone within."

The ideal of static drama was not achieved, except in very short plays such as *L'Intruse, Les Aveugles,* and *L'Intérieur,* and Maeterlinck himself soon abandoned, and later disavowed, his theory. But the symbolist movement in the theater did tend to dissolve dramatic action in the very process of trying to deepen and universalize it. The individual became a shadowy figure, a state of mind, sometimes a mere symbol. For a time, Gordon Craig actually entertained the notion of replacing the living actor with a "super-marionette," since the human being—that is, the actor—introduces a disturbing factor in the stage director's and scenic artist's production design. But the "super-marionette" was

an ideal upon which Craig and his disciples did not insist. It was sufficient to insist upon rigorous stylization of the actor's movements, speech, and gesture or, as Craig declared in 1911 in his influential book *On the Art of the Theatre*, upon the development of "a new form of acting consisting for the main part of symbolical gesture." The symbolist ideal of acting, although often enough modified in practice and actually fused with Stanislavskian "inner realism" by the great director Copeau, was indeed the first of several attempts to depersonalize acting and subordinate it to design. (An extreme was reached by the Russian director Meyerhold in his Soviet constructivist phase when he conceived acting as "bio-mechanics" and associated it with acrobatics; Parisian avant-gardists led by Cocteau were particularly fascinated with the circus, to which they contributed ballet plays, music, and settings; and the avant-garde Russian director Tairov virtually treated stage directing for a time as a form of choreography and favored cubism in design.) Human nature, always a complex and exigent reality in the great ages of Western drama, became attenuated, if not indeed theoretically irrelevant, once the theater's symbolists concentrated on spiritual essence, "beauty," and the power of design. The sense of environment, so important to the realistic theater, also became irrelevant. A character was very likely to be lost in a mist of electric-light atmosphere when he was not already lost in a forest of verbal and visual symbols.

Symbolist drama gained great attractiveness from advances in stagecraft promoted by Adolphe Appia and Gordon Craig and their talented disciples. Their imaginative, expressive effects had a distinctive, often memorable, character. Dramatically used space, suggestive backgrounds, vertical and horizontal masses shaped and reshaped by electric light, sculptural forms, and careful design brought beauty and imagination to the stage. By comparison with symbolist scenery, realistic stage design had, indeed, been crude and cluttered. As a result of lessons learned from pioneering symbolism at the turn of the century, scenic design today is highly selective, even for realistic social and psychological plays. In every other respect, too—in costuming and in general production design for which Reinhardt became celebrated, as well as in the poetic quality of the dialogue—the sense of beauty, which naturalists had neglected, was now well served.

At the same time, however, the sense of drama itself became enfeebled, and even dramatic dialogue suffered a decline of vigor and vibrancy except when it was fortunately allied with peasant dialect, notably in Ireland, in the plays of Synge and Lady Gregory. Poetry became primary for such symbolists as Hofmannsthal and the young Yeats, and much of this essentially lyrical and narrative poetry talked or sang about dramatic experience instead of rendering it in action-propelled dialogue. And poetic prose, as employed in many a Maeterlinck tone

poem such as *La Mort de Tintagiles* (1894) or an Andreyev drama such as *The Life of Man* (1906), represented an improvement only to the degree that the movement of the play was not impeded by prolixity; the prose tended to be repetitive and portentous, rather than dramatically forceful. Dialogue and action often failed to mesh; there was often too little substantiality of action, character, and milieu for the dialogue to stay in gear. Much symbolist writing for the theater, therefore, sounded as if the authors and their creations were talking around a subject or were trying to attach themselves to an experience constantly undergoing deliquescence.

The symbolist plays of Maeterlinck, Hofmannsthal, Hauptmann, the young Yeats (from 1892 to 1917), and Alexander Blok variously provide substitutions of fancy, mood, sentiment, and lyric poetry for the substantial characters and well-marked conflicts of realistic drama. Writing of Ibsen in 1893, Henry James could declare, "... I feel in him, to the pitch of almost intolerable boredom, the presence and the insistence of life." No such confession could have been wrung from James by the plays of the symbolists. Their elusive and allusive style fingered life through veils. Ronald Peacock, in *The Poet in the Theatre*,[5] refers to Ibsen's "extraordinary sense of precipitated crisis" and adds that Ibsen's situations "seem to have been shaped under the compulsion of an acute emotional response to the utmost concentration of conflict and tension." I know of only one notable symbolist dramatist in whom this compulsion could be found—Andreyev. And in Andreyev, the compulsion nearly always borders on hysteria.

Andreyev's name, indeed, can introduce the second and explosive antirealistic phase of the theater. In some of his plays, such as *King Hunger* and *The Black Maskers*, this gifted hysteric bridged symbolism and expressionism. Strindberg, who became the founder of expressionist theater when he began to write his so-called "dream plays" at the turn of the century, also had an overdeveloped sense of disorientation. The expressionist style reached a turbulent climax, mainly in central Europe, between 1910 and 1925, and attracted international recognition especially with the plays of Kaiser and Toller and the stage productions of Leopold Jessner and Jürgen Fehling. Expressionist theater virtually completed the dissolution into dream and the disintegration into frenzy of the classic world picture of the major realists. With the diffusion of expressionism after 1914, the theater acquired a dramatic style singularly appropriate for revolution and anarchy. It may be of interest to observe that the first well-received play by a new German writer after World War II was also an expressionist drama—*Draußen vor der Tür* by Wolfgang Borchert.

Strindberg's description of his expressionist method in the preface to

[5] New York, 1945, p. 79.

The Dream Play may serve as a summary of the main features of dramatic expressionism:

> . . . the author has tried to imitate the disconnected but seemingly logical form of the dream. Anything may happen; everything is possible and probable. Time and space do not exist. On an insignificant background of reality, imagination designs and embroiders novel patterns; a medley of memories, experience, free fancies, absurdities and improvisations.
>
> The characters split, double, multiply, vanish, solidify, blur, clarify. But one consciousness reigns above them all—that of the dreamer; and before it there are no secrets, no incongruities, no scruples, no laws.[6]

To this description of the dream technique, employed in many expressionist plays even without the formal motivation of a dream subject, we may add the extreme rapidity of action and the swiftly stabbing, stenographic dialogue present in post-Strindbergian expressionism, as exemplified by Toller's *Masse-Mensch* or O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*.

The expressionists reintroduced the soliloquy and the aside, the tirade, and the histrionic prose and verse which the realists and naturalists had banished from their stage as inconsistent with verisimilitude or naturalness and especially with the "fourth-wall" principle of scenic illusion. In endeavoring to *express* reality rather than to *represent* it, they inevitably moved toward theatricalism, and their view of life itself tended to be theatrical as well as generally subjective. For this reason, as well as because environment for them was subjectively volatile or in a state of actual transition (if not, indeed, disintegration), the expressionists brought back into vogue the multiscened type of play structure as well. These changes, also present in other kinds of modernist stylization, could in themselves contribute imagination, ingenuity, and verve to playwriting. And the discreet employment of expressionism, as in O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* and Elmer Rice's *The Adding Machine*, can be genially credited to the modern theater's resourcefulness or dramatic ambience. The fact is, however, that the expressionist movement returned to theatricality, in the main, as a mode of expressing a disordered world picture, private disorientation, and a sense of impending or actual social disaster. The dramatic world of expressionism became after 1914 a veritable vortex, and expressionist directors led by Leopold Jessner, staging plays on steep ramps soon to be called *Jessnertreppen*, expected their actors to move at breakneck speed and vehemently to theatricalize their performance in voice and gesture too. We may grant to the best examples of expressionist drama some claim to poetic form and style, as well as to social idealism. But the dramatic effect was generally frenzied and traumatic.

It is less necessary here to dwell on parallel fragmentations of the realists' world picture by the *dadaist, surréaliste*, futurist, and constructivist experiments of our century. The subject belongs mainly to the

[6] *Plays by Strindberg* (First Series) (New York, 1926), p. 24.

history of the stage, and only a few of the extremist plays, such as E. E. Cummings' *him* and Cocteau's *Orphée*, have texts that can bear critical scrutiny. In the surrealistic theater, the individual and his environment were allowed little identity and fixity. The surrealist procedure was to develop action and dialogue very nearly by free association, and to contrive somehow to pulverize the world of stable and logical relationships. To approach "reality" in the surrealist sense of the term was to achieve liberation from action and knowledge precipitated and fixed by consciousness, to give free play to the unconscious self. It was deemed necessary for the artist in the theater to violate the world of recognizable action and things and to cultivate the absurd in the form of bizarre and often inconsequent theatricality. To Ibsen, the world as reflected, analyzed, and judged in the drama had to make sense in order to be truly real. To a consistent surrealist the world was bound to be least real when the action was most cohesive and the argument most coherent. To reflect the world of reason and action was to peddle a pinchbeck reality; to engage in analysis was tantamount to flogging a dead horse; to make evaluations or arrive at judgments was futile when social reality was discarded as a frame of reference.

The advance of dramatic nihilism in various stylistic guises and programs for dramatic art became particularly marked in avant-garde theaters after World War I; and it is as significant as it is regrettable that the progress of nihilism on the stage was impeded chiefly by the philistinism of the general public rather than by a strong countermovement of neorealism.

If we except the so-called socialist realism of the Communist world, which calls for an elementary "boy loves tractor" type of realistic drama garnished with propaganda, two movements in the theater have tended directly to oppose the nihilist tendencies of postrealistic modernism. One is existentialism; the other, epic realism.

The brief vogue of existentialist drama during the 1940s reintroduced some Ibsenist moral jurisprudence into the theater by stressing the theme of self-reliance and personal responsibility. But the affirmations in the plays of Sartre and his school usually sounded like counsels of desperation; and the odor of decay was not dispelled by existentialist ethics in the case of some of the best-known plays, such as Sartre's *Huis clos* and Camus' *Caligula*. Moreover, existentialism failed to engender any special dramatic form and style.

A more important countermovement has been the so-called epic theater developed in central Europe since the 1920s. Its leaders, Erwin Piscator and Bertolt Brecht, have carried objectivity to the point of developing various kinds of documentary and semidocumentary drama; a somewhat parallel development in the United States, mainly under the impetus supplied by the Federal Theatre of the 1930s, led to the com-

position of so-called "living newspapers," such as Arthur Arent's review of the housing problem in American cities, *One-Third of a Nation*. With or without characteristic Marxist leanings, the dramatists of the "epic" style have adhered to the positivist orientation which sustained nineteenth-century realism. At the same time, however, they have rejected realistic dramaturgy and style as too confining, just as Brecht and Piscator rejected even socially oriented expressionism as too unrealistic because unobjective.

Instead, the leaders of epic theater have elected a theatricalist approach to playwriting and stage production. Their very desire to express social reality has led them to create a style of drama, epic in extension and presentational in method. The typical epic play consists of separate episodes, less related by plot than by an idea presented in free theatrical style. Episodes objectively rendered as in a realistic play are supplemented by one or more nonrealistic devices, which usually break the emotional connection, destroy the "illusion," and annihilate the "fourth-wall" convention. These devices may be narrations, explanations, exhortations (by a Voice, a Narrator, or a Chorus delivering a "mass chant") frankly directed at the audience—also lyrics, demonstrations of an idea, or visual aids such as projected slides, charts, and slogans. The ideal epic play has been largely a lesson play—a *Lehrstück*[7] or teaching play, as Brecht has called it. Some sort of demonstration dominates each epic-theater variant, whether it be a comic opera such as the *Threepenny Opera*, a Federal Theatre "living newspaper," a biographical drama such as Brecht's *Galileo*, or a parable such as his *Good Woman of Setzuan* (*Der gute Mensch von Setzuan*).

Whether factual or imaginative in subject matter as well as treatment, epic drama is the drama of objective relationships; it constitutes an art of "epic realism," the term Brecht now favors. Nevertheless, epic theater represents a revolutionary twentieth-century departure from the essentially settled, individual-oriented, emotion-based middle-class world of realistic drama. Dramatic realism aims at a unified style; epic realism tends to be a mélange of styles—narrative, dramatic, and lyrical, descriptive and hortatory at the same time. Dramatic realism favors compact action; epic realism, episodic action. Dramatic realism tends to present the individual as an end in himself; epic realism disclaims any such intention even when the genius or sympathy of the playwright and the actors creates rounded and moving characterization. (Brecht was disturbed, for example, when his Zürich audience identified itself with the "Niobe-heroine" of his *Mutter Courage*, and made alterations in the text with the object of lowering the emotional charge. The camp-following mother, who loses all her children, was not to be allowed to interpose

[7] This term was mistranslated in the American theater of the 1930s as the "learning play."

her suffering humanity between the public and the author's intention to demonstrate in her story "das rein merkantile Wesen des Kriegs." See Brecht's *Versuche 20/21*, Frankfurt am Main, 1949.) Brecht has rejected the value of emotional identification and catharsis on the grounds that a play should leave the audience in possession of its critical faculties for the purpose of learning something conducive to social action. For this reason, he has been a strenuous opponent of illusionist stage production and Stanislavskian acting, which is individualistic "inner realism" based upon the actor's thorough identification with the character he plays. Brecht, calling instead for *Verfremdung*, requires the actor to stand outside the part to a degree, so that his performance may constitute a more or less detached comment on the character. Epic theater is both antirealistic and anti-Aristotelian; and this cool, rationalistic school of neorealism has actually jolted the foundations of Western drama more drastically, because very much more effectively, than any of the primarily subjectivist deviations from realism.

We may conclude that in only one general respect have the various antirealistic deviations of our century been essentially constructive in the theater—and that is in their tendency to retheatricalize the drama. Retheatricalized dramaturgy, as well as stage art, has resulted in the resurgence of poetic and imaginative playwriting and stage production. The results have been least disturbing and have won the widest public acceptance in the case of a more or less autonomous theatricalism dissociated from any specifically symbolist, expressionist, or surrealist program. We may define this theatricalism as the practice of recreating life in terms of the theater. Theatricalism favors the cultivation of the histrionic sensibility of the playwright, the actor, and the public in full recognition of the fact that the medium—namely, *theater*—should be revealed rather than concealed in the text of the play, and that the theatricality of the stage and drama should be developed rather than suppressed. In the arts of the stage this principle was put into practice after the beginning of the century by such renowned directors as Copeau, Jouvet, Dullin, and Barrault. And in playwriting we may observe the results in the varied artistry of Cocteau's *The Infernal Machine* and Obey's *Noah*, Lorca's *The Love of Don Perlimplin for Belisa in His Garden*, Giraudoux's *Intermezzo*, and Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth*. At one extreme, theatricalism has been allied with extreme formalism, as in Yeats's latter-day Noh-theater styled plays; but it has even been found possible to combine realism and theatricalism in the same popular play, as in the case of *Our Town* and *The Glass Menagerie*.

All dramatic writing can benefit from the increased valuation now placed on the theater as the medium a playwright should use imaginatively and expressively. And the poetry of theatricalism, a *poésie de théâtre*, as Cocteau called it, may well become the standard twentieth-

century substitute for a poetic theater nourished by verse drama. An imaginative deployment of plot materials and visual effects, a creative shaping of the *mythos* or fable with expressive language and stage movement—this *poésie de théâtre* may provide more original and exemplary dramatic art for our century than the neoromantic, reminiscent though sometimes dazzling, ventures in verse from Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* to Christopher Fry's *The Lady's Not for Burning.*

In all but its mildest manifestation as fantasy or simply poetic drama, however, even this general theatricalism suggests a distinct shift of sensibility and orientation away from the security of the old life-rooted and illusion-dispensing theater of realism. The practicing theatricalist fastidiously or "sophisticatedly" draws attention to "theater" rather than to that rather crude and exacting commodity of literature which, for want of a better word, we call "life." He does this with various formalist procedures such as Yeats used in *A Full Moon in March* and T. S. Eliot in *Family Reunion* (with its chorus of the Eumenides); or he actually turns out a charade of sorts such as the Anouilh-Fry *Ring Round the Moon.* Not infrequently, in fact, the author employs the "play within the play" device or some variant, the effect ranging from a pleasant entertainment such as Molnar's *The Play's the Thing* to philosophically and psychologically charged comedy (*Six Characters in Search of an Author*) or melodrama (Pirandello's *Henry IV*). Sometimes the theatricalist principle appears simply in the distinctly theatrical fantastication of the work, as in Giraudoux's *La Folle de Chaillot* and *Intermezzo,* and the commingling of wit, poetry, and ingenuity results in a twilight loveliness. This is the drama of civilized disenchantment that has none of the adolescence but much of the world weariness of *fin de siècle* aestheticism. And sometimes the theatrical principle is observed by deliberately addressing the audience (to remind it that it is in the theater attending a "show"), or by intentionally destroying the illusion of reality and violating the fourth-wall convention. Sometimes there is considerable skittishness, aesthetic pretentiousness, or strain in the endeavor to tell the public what it should know from the start—that life is life and art is art, or that theater is theater. In the case of dramas of serious import, there is a more or less disturbing reminder that modern theatricalism, unlike the theatricalism of the Greek or the Elizabethan drama, is an artificial creation. Not only is the modern author calling attention to his technique as if to say "Let's make theater" ("Yes, I have tricks in my pocket, I have things up my sleeve," says Tom, the narrator of *The Glass Menagerie,* as if he spoke for all theatricalist playwrights), but he is likely to create the impression that he is being coy or apologetic about his seriousness, as when Cocteau and Wilder burlesque their dramatic action.

In such conspicuously theatricalist plays of exalted purport as *La*

Machine infernale and *The Skin of Our Teeth* (and here I would add Giraudoux's *Electre*), one may discern a divided intention and a split effect. There is an intrinsic conflict between the natural creation of illusion and the performance of a stunt or the cultivation of aesthetic pretensions. Early in the first act of *The Skin of Our Teeth*, Sabina, the skittish housemaid *cum* Lilith of this *Finnegans Wake* history of man ("Mr. Antrobus"), tells the audience "I don't understand a word of this play." And the audiences in 1942 apparently took their cue from her, dooming the most original American play of the war period to failure. Confusion or irritation (certainly the latter) was inevitable when Sabina cried out, "Stop! Stop! Don't play this scene . . . Last night you almost strangled him," when Henry, the Cain of Wilder's play, in the midst of the tense third-act quarrel was about to hurl himself against Mr. Antrobus. Playing cat and mouse with one's subject by spoofing it theatrically, as in the second-act Rotarian convention of the Mammals in Atlantic City, may provide entertainment. But playing cat and mouse with the audience by taking it *in* and *out* of the illusion of reality, as in the aforementioned third-act scene, is hardly the way to inspire public confidence in a vision or conviction.

Giraudoux was similarly skittish or performed the same theatricalist legerdemain in so somber a drama as his *Electre*. "The Gardener's Lament," an interlude between the two parts of the play, starts with Electra's ex-fiancé, the gardener, stepping out of his role and saying to the audience, "I'm no longer in the running. [That is, I am no longer Electra's fiancé and no longer a character in Giraudoux's play.] That's why I'm free to come and tell you what the play can't tell you. In stories like this, etc." This "willed" and cultivated theatricalism suggests, if it does not invariably succumb to, a schizoid and Alexandrian sensibility.

Entirely at home in "show business" with theatrical charades, musical comedies and revues, the theatricalist playwright gives the impression of being an insecure dramatist whenever he becomes serious. Theatricalism, then, curiously appears to be less at ease in the theater than the old antitheatricalist realism ever was. It is remarkable how much sheer "theater" Ibsen and Strindberg, Chekhov and O'Casey, managed to whip up in their realistic plays by ostensibly ignoring the theater and looking at humanity instead. The presentation of life "in the form of make-believe," as the critic Alexander Bakshy has called pure theatricalism, has been a fascinating enterprise. But it has been a thoroughly solvent one thus far only as "make-believe"—which has surely been only the means rather than the prime end of great dramatic literature.

Queens College

CRITICISM IN CRISIS

HARRY LEVIN

1. The Nineteenth Century and After

"CE SERAIT encore une gloire, dans cette grande confusion de la société qui commence, d'avoir été les derniers des délicats. —Soyons les derniers de notre ordre, de notre ordre d'esprits." The confusion has been even greater than Saint-Beuve foresaw when he set down this reflection a hundred years ago, and those of us who are still occupied with the problems of criticism have abandoned any pretensions to his kind of elegant connoisseurship. He and the kindred spirits that he invokes enjoyed the privilege of living more at ease with their time and in closer touch with the past; the influx and reflux of subject matter from both of those continual sources were rich indeed, yet not too overwhelmingly large to be breasted by a nicely discriminating eclecticism. Something like a synthesis could be effected between classical judgment and romantic appreciation, but it was too precarious and personal to outlast the middle years of the nineteenth century. Walter Pater, addressing himself to the next generation, exceeded Sainte-Beuve in his epicurean sense of the heightened moment and the coming deluge. The flood—by which I mean the uncontrollable flow of undifferentiated reading matter—was destined to sweep away the surviving landmarks, so that, when we take our bearings in this postdiluvian world, it is by means of such dead reckonings as I have been rash enough to venture here.

Not only have tastes changed, and changed utterly, but the concept of good taste has lost its validity, since that depended upon its appeal to universal standards. *Buen gusto*, the faculty of Renaissance man for judging aright, has gradually yielded to the sort of uncritical enthusiasm connoted by "gusto," or to the degustation of literary vintages that has its cellar book in Saintsbury's *History of Criticism*. Critics, falling back on impressionism, sought their own criteria in the range and perceptiveness of their individual impressions. Some of these were based upon a rounded cultivation which might well have passed for professional erudition among their successors; other instances have been so capricious that today the term "impressionist" has gone the way of "amateur" and "dilettante." Such terms, as long as they had a positive meaning, embodied the natural impulse of every man to be his own critic rather than delegate another job to another expert. Their passing marks a final stage in the dissolution of that ideal which Nietzsche so poignantly and vainly evoked, the whole man. The century had its exemplary

figure in Goethe; it also had its object lesson in Coleridge. The philosophical fragments of his poetic ruins, shored in *Biographia Literaria*, ironically emphasized the need for organic wholeness. Similarly, Nietzsche's desperate attempt to discover and affirm a set of modern values succeeded only in its negative impact, its iconoclastic critique of all traditions. The year of his death, 1900, bore witness not to the advent of the superman but to the heyday of the specialist.

2. *The New Alexandria*

Now decadence, the state of mind anticipated by Sainte-Beuve and consciously cultivated in the 1890s, need not be critically inarticulate. On the contrary, that manifestation of it known as Alexandrianism is characterized precisely by the ascendancy of criticism over artistic creation. That we are living through such a period has been attested *a fortiori* by such creative writers as Thomas Mann. If the main effort of Matthew Arnold's day was already "a critical effort," as he never tired of repeating, then poet-critics have had increasing occasion to call each successive age an "age of criticism." The original Alexandria could never have vied with our epoch in its encyclopaedic profusion of revivals, revaluations, exegeses, canons, editions, and manuals. Our relationship to the past is a gradual relinquishment rather than any sharp Nietzschean break; it involves many reasserted continuities and perhaps one consistent trend of reaction, which is suggested by the English title of Mario Praz's study of decadent themes—*The Romantic Agony*. The power of romanticism is felt in the very gestures of dissociation that every subsequent school has seen fit to make. Insofar as the romanticists stood in perennial opposition to classicism, all those who reacted against them joined forces in a sort of countermovement. Naturalism and symbolism, though they diverged to planes remote from each other, shared a predisposition for analysis. The antiromanticism of Irving Babbitt, T. E. Hulme, or the *Action Française*, while it could not activate a classical revival, could foster an approach to literature which is more rationalistic than intuitive.

The romantic movement provided a dialectical pattern, as well as an initial impetus, for the ever-accelerating cycle of cultural movements that follows from generation to generation. Criticism, in each case, has been divided between the manifestoes of coteries and the strictures of academies. The party of innovation always tends to conceive itself as an "advance guard," in terms of a military analogy which Renato Poggioli has traced to Proudhon, thereby indicating a historical parallel between literary and political radicalism. This kinship was acknowledged when modernism in the arts was described as *Kulturbolschewismus*; but the actual revolutions of our time have proved so grimly far-reaching that the later aesthetic "-isms" seem comparatively attenu-

ated and inconsequential. Futurism, as James Joyce predicted, had no future. When the modernist tired of playing the revolutionary, he could draw a further comparison between his work and scientific experiment. Here, too, he aligned himself with an intellectual élite as against an uncomprehending majority. Science, at least technology, has had its influence on the techniques of art, which have become abstracted and dehumanized—so Ortega y Gasset would maintain—to the point where they are bound to be unpopular. The critic is therefore led, by the complexities of his subject, to be what is popularly regarded as a highbrow. His exemplar is Paul Valéry's cerebral hero, M. Teste. His horizon is Valéry's awareness of tradition extending from its Mediterranean origins into our lives, and terminating in that crisis of intellect which transcends—and threatens to extirpate—criticism.

3. The Persistence of History

History is one *donnée* which we must take as it comes. Our consciousness of it, our retrospective acknowledgment that we are heirs of all the ages, is itself a heritage from the Renaissance. The historical method, devised and bequeathed by the romanticists to literary historians like De Sanctis and Brandes, prompted them to interpret the unfolding of national and international culture on a scale commensurate with the grandeur of their themes. Such works have since been somewhat outdated by the more exhaustive researches they stimulated, which in turn have been reducing literary history to a mere sequence of monographs and compilations. Taine, who made criticism compitable with the fulfillment of the doctoral degree, was primarily interested in literature as a source of historical documentation; his emphasis on background, molded into an academic formula by Gustave Lanson, deflected the attention of generations of students. So much of the extraliterary was brought into their frame of critical reference that the aesthetic object was all but completely obscured; hence, upon recovering that object, some of the present generation have come to assume a fundamental incompatibility between the categories of literary history and those of literary criticism. Their willingness to make this assumption is strengthened by the demands and pressures of current history, along with the attractions of escaping into a bookish sphere from which such contingencies can be excluded by definition. But it is that very exclusion which imposes on bookishness its mode of unreality, and their refusal to face the collateral facts of scholarship runs the risk of ignoring the facts of life.

To put the matter more affirmatively, the sense of a living past—the ambiance of anything not contemporary—can only be reconstructed by the skilled application of relevant detail. For example, no phase of English poetry seems more vital to contemporary readers than the meta-

physical school. But it would scarcely have this vitality if Sir Herbert Grierson had not been able to offer us Donne's poems in an authoritative text with an indispensable commentary. Footnotes are not—or should not be—excrescences; they are simply our means of removing, so far as we can, the encrustations of time. Since we cannot see things under the aspect of eternity, we do our best to understand the conditions of their existence in its relation to ours. By understanding the context in which a given work was originally framed, we can detach it without undue violence and bring it into the differing contexts of our own experience. Knowledge of history leads to control of history, according to the Marxists, who have amply proved that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. Conversely, historical ignorance is a form of slavery; the greatest liberation the mind has known came when the humanists rediscovered the classics. What is historically unique in our epoch, André Malraux has perceived, is the accumulation of art objects from all periods on a timeless plane in an imaginary museum. So we might speak of an imaginary library, where the whole continuum of man's recorded expression can be connected and placed in perspective.

4. The Autonomy of Art

Thus criticism learns to live with history. Writers, on the other hand, have felt more free to accept or reject the historical situation in which they have found themselves. Rejection has sometimes taken the form of social protest, particularly against the bourgeoisie; at other times, denying the claims of society altogether, it has professed an intransigent aestheticism. Marxism, with Plekhanov, explains this second position as an aggravated consequence of the first; and there is certainly a temperamental linkage between the writer's sense of alienation and his intensified self-consciousness. The less secure his status, the more he is preoccupied with his craft; he makes common cause with the misunderstood practitioners of the plastic arts; in short, he identifies himself with the artist's role. This identification, since Flaubert, has been axiomatic. The novel has become not merely a demonstration of craftsmanship, but often a self-portrait of the novelist as artist and even a presentation of his artistic theories. The Petrarchan ideal of literary immortality and the Kantian idea of aesthetic disinterestedness combined to make their highest claims when Proust defined the function of art as a Last Judgment. But such a view proceeded from a point of detachment which no longer seems attainable. Jean-Paul Sartre, turning away from the ultimate, sharply reminds us that we are immersed in the immediate. Literature cannot be pure, for the existentialist, so long as life is not. So long as men are engaged in conflict, words will be used as weapons, and writers will bear a special responsibility.

In this respect, the wheel has come full circle during the past hundred

years. Poetry had previously been attacked and defended on the grounds of morality or utility; the beautiful had seldom been allowed to stand without the support of the true or the good. The rallying cry of "art for art's sake" was a defense against more extrinsic requirements; in the hands of such masters of paradox as Gautier and Wilde it became a counterattack on didacticism. Their endeavor was not to isolate art from other human concerns but to accord it a certain priority among them, and above all to keep the intrinsic standards of literary technique from being subordinated to the cross-purposes of journalism or propaganda. To go farther and assert that literature should be autotelic, having no aim beyond its own existence, is a jejune conception largely propounded by hostile critics. The most that responsible proponents have urged is that the practice of the arts be considered autonomous—which means respectively governed by laws of their own but, like other institutions, sensitive to social influences and adaptable to historical changes. Today the single dedicated exponent of *ars gratia artis* is the roaring lion that figures as trademark for one of Hollywood's most venal producers of films. The metamorphosis of the phrase into Latin is an unexpected twist of pedantry, since it has no classical sanction whatsoever. It is invoked to justify sheer entertainment at a moment when, on a more serious level, aesthetics and ethics seem again to be moving closer together.

5. *Problems of Belief*

The study of aesthetics, during its second century, has not resolved the tautologies of its first; the career of Croce may well stand as its monument in the commemorative sense of the word. As a unified field theory of the arts, it has operated on too general a plane to have thrown much light upon problems of form. Nor has it been successful in demonstrating that different artistic media produce the same kind of response, an emotion uniquely detached from other feelings. Literature appeals to so many values, aesthetic and otherwise, that it requires a pluralistic approach. John Crowe Ransom once advertised for "an ontological critic," whose presumable task would be to furnish poetry with a philosophic excuse for being. No candidate has yet presented himself; and most other critics have been content to start where the philosophers, the scientists, or the theologians have left off. This has meant that art is ultimately looked upon as a vehicle, not as an article, of belief—whether of Anglicanism for T. S. Eliot or Thomism for Jacques Maritain. All critics, to be sure, are sooner or later confronted with works based upon beliefs they do not share. To what extent is suspension of disbelief possible, and does it leave an adequate basis for criticism? Can doctrines be taken—along with poems—as "pseudostatements," and tested by emotive or formal criteria rather than by correspondence with reality? And if they cannot, must not the critic brave the winds of doctrine, seeking

his particular version of truth? And when he applies what he finds, then will he be just to anything that conflicts with his assumptions?

The circle is even more constricting when the logic is not religious but political. It revolves in the direction of censorship whenever critical judgment is adverse, and—under more sympathetic conditions—toward the sort of moralistic bias that Tolstoy and the Russian critics have exercised. It varies greatly, as between a free society, where Sartre's commitment may be a courageous gesture, and an authoritarian régime, where Ilya Ehrenburg's stand is simply an act of conformity. Marxism has shown two faces: a historical method which is analytic, and a doctrinal position which is dogmatic. Its repudiation of traditional ideologies has rendered it especially alert to the explicit consideration of writers in terms of what they implicitly believe. As it has consolidated its own ideology, it has exacted a stricter adherence to ever-tightening canons of correctness. Thus a literate and cosmopolitan Marxist—and such a one survives in Georg Lukács—can move frely amid the self-critical literature of the past and of the West, but finds himself entrammeled by the anticritical convolutions of the party line in Communist Hungary. The coexistence of opposing orthodoxies, making absolute claims to moral authority, constitutes—for those who adhere to neither of them—an argument in favor of relativism. But freedom from state control or from church discipline is not necessarily a warrant of the critic's professional independence. One of our liveliest journals of literary opinion flaunts the title, *Partisan Review*. Significantly, its twenty-year history has been a recantation of Marxist principles; such militance as it still musters is centered less on causes than on personalities.

6. The Role of Personality

At all events, our lives as individuals are circumscribed by forces of uniformity, if not of conformity. In retrospect, it might well seem that creative talents had found the widest scope for their individuality in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Remy de Gourmont broadened the definition of symbolism to the verge of anarchy, when he termed it "the expression of individualism in art." The life and work of André Gide have been a striking test of the lengths to which such freedom of thought and action could be pursued. The tendency toward autobiography, toward the poet who dramatizes his ego and the novelist who lives his fiction, has been part of the romantic bequest. Antiromantic reaction, turning from the image of the artist to the sphere of his artistry, has attempted to scrutinize the latter with a technician's impersonality. The focal point of the scrutiny has been—in a phrase formulated by a half-forgotten classicist, Washington Allston, and promulgated by Mr. Eliot—"the objective correlative." This is a far cry from the subjectivity of authors who put their overt selves into their works, forcing

their critics to become biographers, or from the preoccupation of so much American criticism with the circumstances that underlie an artistic career. Croce, who was a mind of the nineteenth century in his emphasis on self-expression and on the uniqueness of the individual, belongs to the twentieth in his distinction between practical and poetic personality—his insistence that, for critical purposes, the man is the style.

Paradoxically enough, at the very point when the biographical approach to literature seems rather outmoded, the study of biography itself has taken on the newer dimensions of psychology. A closely related field has opened up which ought not to be confounded with criticism, but which could not be neglected by anyone professing an interest in the imaginative process. Granted that the figure in the carpet, as a conscious product of craftsmanship, cannot be reduced by psychoanalysis to a mere pattern of subconscious motivation. Nevertheless, since a work of art entails a whole complex of dynamic relationships, its genesis is a relevant fact about it and a probable clue to its significance. Freud, though he took a somewhat reductive view of the arts, was generous in his acknowledgment of the insights he owed to writers. Would that writers were comparably rigorous in applying the concepts they borrowed from him! Having exposed themselves on paper more fully and frankly than other men, they have incidentally built up a body of documents which the more specialized students of human nature can utilize as sublimated case histories. These can be obliquely illuminating; but, as most other cases are less self-revealing, comparison becomes invidious; and the writer is treated as more neurotic than other men, a scapegoat for Max Nordau's pseudoscientific philistinism. Psychologists may devote themselves more profitably, in the long run, to the configuration of types than to the individuation of personalities. Studies of Shakespeare's imagery have gone astray when they have been too personal, whereas such broader investigations as Gaston Bachelard's have revealed how much the poets draw upon a common imagination.

7. The Quest for the Archetype

Imagination, in its conveyance of universals by means of particulars, tends to stress the one or the other. We are now undergoing a transition between a lavish concern for the minutiae of a highly organized existence and a difficult adjustment to the exigencies of some more generalized outlook—in the most broadly programmatic terms, between realism at one extreme and symbolism at the other. The art of the recent epoch is strongly marked by the interplay of those tendencies, but there can be little doubt that its continuing direction is toward the primordial, the irreducible, the typical. What is surprising is to have reached this main road by way of such introspective and devious bypaths. Dreams, the wayward projections of fantasy, were worlds of escape for poets like

Rimbaud; for his inheritors, the surrealists, they have been deliberate and preferable alternatives to reality. How they are compounded of actual experience, and how pertinently they comment upon it, critics have learned from psychoanalysts. Jung's formula of the collective unconscious, though it is a suggestive abstraction rather than a cultural fact, has helped to explain how the dream recapitulates the myth; while archaeologists, anthropologists, and folklorists have shown that myths use the same vocabulary of symbols and the same repertory of motifs as dreams are made of. All this has shed an illumination so dazzling that it has sometimes obliterated the degrees of difference between mythology and literature, or—as with Friedrich Gundolf—between mythography and criticism. Nowadays it is virtually taken for granted, in some quarters, that dramas are rituals out of *The Golden Bough*.

The scholar's inclination to see the varieties of human behavior reduced to a manageable number of patterns and themes is not restricted to his perception of recurrent archetypes beneath the work of modern writers. By tracing a succession of literary commonplaces or *topoi* through the Middle Ages, Ernst Robert Curtius has reaffirmed the continuity of the classical tradition. The "unit-idea," as explored by Arthur Lovejoy, has given an integrating principle to other historians of philosophy. Both of these methods move through history toward a plane of timelessness, where all ideas and topics are at one with their prototypes, and where the scholar-critic gains—as it were—the presence of the past. But it is quite another thing for the creative writer to confer a mythical kind of pastness upon the present. He can, if his name is William Butler Yeats, make himself "a coat of old mythologies," but he cannot improvise a myth by an act of the will. The archetypal is that which precedes the imaginings of the poet and pre-exists in the mind of his audience. Had Dante not written his letter to Can Grande, his project would still have had its rationale in scholastic thought and its iconography in mediaeval cathedrals. For Yeats, discarding one set of legends after another, it was necessary to synthesize *A Vision* explaining his poetic intentions to the even more syncretistic Ezra Pound. A homogeneous system of symbology guided Dante, and his readers after him, through the *selva oscura*. Lacking such guides, we lose ourselves among the confused sounds and shadows of Baudelaire's *forêts de symboles*.

8. The Dark Forest

Because we lack evidence of another world coexisting in parallelism with this one, we perceive no systematic series of correspondences between the two. Yet the habit of scanning a literal text for a symbolic meaning may perhaps reflect some dissatisfaction with immediate realities and some aspiration toward less worldly ideals. This is an Alexandrian mode of thought; it was also the state of mind of the pious Chris-

tians who allegorized the pagan classics. The method of prefiguration, instead of reverting to the archetype, superimposed a later significance upon its original analogues; but its arbitrary cross-references, which Erich Auerbach has so aptly elucidated, had a certain relevance and consistency. Latter-day interpretations of symbolism, having no single frame of reference, often derive from a work neither more nor less than the preconceptions they read into it; hence, in the arcane instance of Mallarmé, there are as many readings as interpreters. Here, and elsewhere, the hieratic qualities of the writer himself have been matched by the hierophantic attitude of his critics. Not to be outdone by the ancients, many of the moderns seem to invite hermeneutics—which, without special italics or apologies to the French, we call explication. This invitation has engendered schools of explicators, who have set a standard of subtle ingenuity which has proved so intimidating to younger writers that many of them have turned critic, devoting their creative abilities to symbolistic reinterpretations of the world's great books. But there are courageous exceptions—notably William Empson, who can return from criticism to poetry, not impossibly animated by the hope of inventing an eighth type of ambiguity.

The problem of meaning is serious, however, on both sides and at every level; at the level of communication, it may be the crucial issue before civilization today. Consequently so percipient a critic as I. A. Richards has shifted his attention from writers to readers, and has brought the focus of semantics, pedagogy, and educational psychology to bear upon the reading process itself. The fact that basic literacy has been undermined accounts, on the other side, for the tenuous atmosphere in which some writers have been working. Obscurity, for them, has been associated with absence of recognition; whereas, to an unrecognizing public, it has seemed a cult of unintelligibility. In the ensuing confusion of tongues, much of the blame has fallen upon the interpreters, some of whom are themselves so bedeviled by language that their best effort at clarification turns out to be *obscurum per obscurius*. Others, disaffected from criticism, have gathered the emoluments reserved for men of letters who confirm the unlettered in their *haine de la littérature*. But literature is perdurable enough to survive both critical malpractice and public depreciation; and after all, to paraphrase Archibald MacLeish's famous distich on the art of poetry, existence is even more important than interpretation. The object-in-itself is so central, it has lately been argued, that we ought not to concern ourselves with the author's intention—a useful caveat against taking the word for the deed. But critics will want to reconsider thoughtfully before adopting a principle which would dismiss from their canon the *Prefaces* of Henry James.

9. The Revival of Rhetoric

A complementary argument would insist that it is fallacious to judge a literary work by its effects. Yet judgment is nothing more than considered effect, and effect nothing less than spontaneous judgment. To ignore the reader's response, along with the writer's aim, is to pass over questions of meaning and dwell upon problems of form. These have been, most appropriately, the locus of critical examination. The question-begging dichotomy of form and content, which confused substance with essence and artistic technique with external decoration, has outlived what usefulness it may have had for critics more concerned with ideology than with art. The category of content is misleading because literature can never be self-contained; its expressiveness springs from its innate capacity for leaving the page, entering our minds, and mingling with other matters; its verbal constructs are aesthetic objects not in themselves, but by virtue of sounds and associations, metaphors and conventions. That is why a text cannot meaningfully be uprooted from its context, and also why critics are so readily sidetracked by extraneous considerations. As long as it takes these essential factors into account, recent criticism is richly justified in concentrating upon artistic assimilation and formal arrangement. If the watchword, "New Criticism," has become a misnomer, it is because the activities thereby denoted have been so various, so widely diffused in America and England, and so comprehensively adumbrated on the continent. Slavic formalism, the French *explication de texte*, and the German school of Romance philologists have still one precept which we flout at our peril—stylistics must be firmly grounded upon linguistics.

It is commonly agreed, by both the New Critics and their fellow travelers, that they have dealt most effectively with poetry. With more extended and heterogeneous forms, they have kept fairly close to the texture, while the structure has remained as elusive as ever. Kenneth Burke has made this latter province his own, and has imported more or less pertinent notions into it from many other disciplines. Less fruitfully, in transposing rhetorical terms to social and psychological situations, he has blurred the distinctions between rhetoric and life. The classical rhetoricians, though they were more rigidly categorical in their analyses of tropes and devices, had the advantage of a more exact terminology. Our up-to-date rhetoricians, in the very act of discerning the niceties of style, compound a jargon which might give occasional pause to a sociologist. Opaque phraseology can never be a substitute for clear thinking; and glossaries will not create a universe, where there is a chaos, of discourse. Modern rhetoric, if it is not to be a logomachy, must meet the challenge of the larger structures with more concreteness and discrimination. The very existence of genres was questioned

by Croce, and almost discredited when Brunetière tried to fit them into a Darwinian scheme of evolution; yet the working hypothesis is borne out by the development of drama, as retraced by scholars over the past fifty years. The completion last year of Arnold Toynbee's studies in the morphology of civilizations should encourage students of comparative literature, by establishing a point of convergence where the structural is reconciled with the historical, and where form is seen to be shaped by growth.

10. The Academy or the Market Place

Not the most tenacious champion of the moderns against the ancients, at this late date, would interpret the history of literature as a realization of the idea of progress. We cannot say that art, with all its ups and downs, is progressive; yet to the vast extent that it is cumulative, the knowledge of art—namely criticism—progresses. This knowledge, I hasten to add, is collective in character; for there can be no rivalry, in humanistic stature, between our contemporaries and certain great critics of a hundred years ago—last of their line, according to Sainte-Beuve. If our purview extends beyond theirs, it is owing in large measure to their achievements and those of others. Ours, for better or worse, come somewhat closer to the more organized inquiries of science; we have gained something in professional objectivity, while losing a good deal in personal breadth. Few of our critics feel called upon to set up as ideologues, unlike so many of their nineteenth-century predecessors, who were likewise *politiques et moralistes*. The shaping of public opinion today has become a high-powered technological enterprise in which old-fashioned literary attainments play little part. Edmund Wilson declares, with considerable authority, that the days of the critical free lance are over, and that younger talents are now being forced to choose between journalistic commercialization and academic domestication. The choice may not be so clear-cut in England, we gather from a current article by V. S. Pritchett; but when Mr. Pritchett goes on to lament the gravitation of criticism to the universities, as if it were some sort of new departure, he betrays the incompleteness of his own education.

Since the time of Aristotle, more often than not, the critical function has been connected with the pedagogical and the scholarly. It does not follow that this connection has been invariably fruitful; indeed its regressions to Aristotelianism, which still has exponents after some 2,400 years, have been periodic symptoms of sterility. The emergence of the critic as reviewer, commenting on books as they come along rather than lecturing about them afterwards, coincided historically with the rise of periodicals in the eighteenth century. The decline of reviewing in the twentieth, to a level where it is hardly distinguishable from publishers' advertising, will probably end by depriving responsible

criticism of any popular forum. Craftsmen, the writers themselves, will doubtless go on contributing the most valuable insights into their craft; but, because it is for them to speak the first word, the last must be spoken by critics. Critics, in their resistance to the market place and their return to the academy, have lately been joined by many creative writers. What the term "creative" signifies in the academic curriculum, and whether it always outranks "critical" in the aesthetic hierarchy, are moot questions which we may see resolved. Those who criticize are those who cannot create, it used to be said by—among others—Bernard Shaw, who disproved the maxim by switching in mid-career from dramatic criticism to dramaturgy. Among all those who live by the printed word, the differences are much less important than their shared commitment —which is now, or never, the critique of forces encroaching not only upon the creation of literature but upon the preservation of culture itself.

Harvard University

BOOK REVIEWS

THE RUSSIAN NOVEL IN FRANCE: 1884-1914. By F. W. J. Hemmings. London: Oxford University Press, 1950. 250 p.

TOLSTOÏ EN FRANCE. By Thaïs S. Lindstrom. Paris: Institut d'Études Slaves, 1952. 172 p.

The publication of Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé's *Le Roman russe* in Paris in June 1886 was followed immediately by a Russian literary "invasion" of such proportions that Vogüé called it a peaceful Russian revenge for the French march upon Moscow in 1812. Some idea of the size of this avalanche of Russian literature in French translation that swept into France can be gained from the statistics on translations of Leo Tolstoy's works alone. Up to the middle of 1886 only five French translations of Tolstoy had been published. Between 1886 and 1890 the number was twenty-five.

Certain closely related aspects of this sudden upsurge of French interest in Russian literature form the subject of the two books reviewed here. Mr. Hemmings' excellently written work, the outgrowth of a doctoral dissertation at Oxford, appeared in print two years before Miss Lindstrom's, which served as her doctoral dissertation at the University of Paris. Confronted with a study that covered much of the same ground she herself had been investigating, Miss Lindstrom wisely took Mr. Hemmings' work into consideration throughout her own book and confined herself to discussing those points (which are numerous) upon which her interpretation differs from his and to presenting material that his study does not contain. As a result, neither of these two works can be adequately reviewed without reference to the other, which it complements.

As its title implies, Mr. Hemmings' work is focussed rather more upon the Russian novel than upon Russian authors, upon art rather than the artist. The breadth implied in the title is somewhat misleading, for, while the author makes some mention of Turgenev, Gogol, Goncharov, and other Russian writers, he devotes by far the greater part of his book to a discussion of the French reaction to the works of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. This does not mean that his perspective is wrong; for certainly Tolstoy and Dostoevsky far overshadowed all other Russian writers in the literary "invasion" that followed Vogüé's book. Nevertheless, the title might lead the reader to expect a less casual treatment of Turgenev in particular, who, after all, spent a great part of his life in France and by Mr. Hemmings' own account "used the very considerable influence he had with French writers and publicists in order to advertise [both Tolstoy and] other Russian novelists."

After beginning with a brief review of earlier French interest in Russia, in which he mentions Mérimée, Alfred Rambaud, and Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu in particular, Mr. Hemmings tells the story of the crusade that Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé launched in the mid-1880s against the "impassiveness" and "pitilessness" of French naturalism. The weapon he used for his attack was the realism of the great Russian novelists, which he declared to be "ennobled by moral emotion, by a concern for the divine, and by sympathy for mankind." In the words of a later French writer, quoted by Mr. Hemmings, "M. de Vogüé a doublement aimé le roman russe: d'abord pour lui-même, et ensuite contre le roman français." The extraordinary vogue of Russian literature that followed in the wake of Vogüé's critical onslaught reached such proportions that the young critic Téodor de Wyzewa afterwards dryly asserted: "There were even certain Russian novelists who did not exist, but whose genius we were none the less permitted to appreciate thanks to the astuteness of the translators." In the midst of all this furor the sober voice

of Wyzewa, who called Vogüé's whole thesis into question, was heard by virtually nobody. It was not until a good decade later that what Mr. Hemmings describes as a "counter-attack" against Russian literary influence was able to get under way.

Following this general account of the Russian "invasion," Mr. Hemmings devotes five chapters to a detailed discussion of Russian literary influences upon six individual writers. He argues (and Miss Lindstrom disputes his argument) that *Mont-Oriol* (1887) and *Pierre et Jean* (1888) reveal the influence of Tolstoy upon Maupassant during the period that coincided with the height of the Russian literary vogue in France. In Huysmans' *Là-bas* (1891) he undertakes to show—not too convincingly—that the author used "one or two anecdotes and odds and ends of narrative" which he had borrowed from Dostoevsky's *Idiot*.

Mr. Hemmings stands on much firmer ground when he discusses Tolstoy's influence on Paul Margueritte. Not only are the parallels between the two men's works unmistakable, but Margueritte himself emphasized them with specific references to Tolstoy in the stories themselves. Mr. Hemmings traces the influence of Tolstoy in Margueritte's works from *Jours d'épreuve* (1886), the first novel he published after his public break with naturalism (in the manifesto against Zola's *La Terre*), to *Pascal Géfosse, La Force des choses, Les Amants,* and *Ma Grande*. Miss Lindstrom, far from disputing Mr. Hemmings at any point in his discussion of Margueritte, reinforces his arguments with several of her own, and calls attention to Tolstoy's influence on two of Margueritte's novels that Mr. Hemmings does not mention—*La Maison ouverte* and *Sur le retour*, both published in 1890.

Mr. Hemmings and Miss Lindstrom disagree over the importance of Russian influence in the literary development that led Paul Bourget to forsake his early naturalist companions and find his way back to the Catholic Church. To be sure, the opportunity for Russian influence was unmistakable, for Bourget was personally acquainted with both Turgenev and Vogüé. Mr. Hemmings sees the influence of Turgenev's pessimism in Bourget's *Cruelle énigme* and of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* in *Crime d'amour* and *André Cornélis*, and he sees "the trace of Tolstoy" in the moralizing, didactic element in Bourget's *Mensonges* and *Le Disciple*. Miss Lindstrom, on the other hand, calls attention to Bourget's preoccupation with the problem of the artist's moral responsibility long before his contacts with Russian literature, and sees Tolstoy's example as no more than a possible source of encouragement to Bourget in pursuing the course of development that he would undoubtedly have followed anyhow.

With the Swiss-born writer Édouard Rod, as with Paul Margueritte, there is no doubt about the Russian influence. As Mr. Hemmings points out, Dostoevsky's "religion of suffering" is evident in *La Course à la mort*, the novel Rod wrote in 1885; and Tolstoy himself addressed a letter of appreciation to Rod for the pleasure he had received from reading *Le Sens de la vie* (1889), the whole theme of which consists in the struggle of the hero to come to terms with the new ideals he had discovered in the works of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. In her comments Miss Lindstrom expresses understandable surprise at Mr. Hemmings' failure to point out also the striking parallel between Rod's *L'inutile effort* and Tolstoy's *Resurrection*—an omission that is all the more astonishing because Mr. Hemmings actually quotes the conversation about *Resurrection* that takes place in Rod's novel. Rod takes over the central idea of *Resurrection*—Nekhlyudov's rediscovery of the girl he had seduced and ruined many years before—and retells it in a Western European setting. The story achieves an originality of its own, however, through the very different way in which Rod deals with the problem raised by Tolstoy.

The longest chapter in Mr. Hemmings' work is devoted to Charles-Louis Philippe. To this reviewer's mind it is also the most satisfacto , of the chapters dealing with Russian influences upon individual writers. Here the author goes

beyond the mere juxtaposition of passages, situations, and characters that we find in abundance elsewhere in the book; and undertakes the considerably more difficult task of penetrating into what might be called the spiritual world of Philippe and his writings and comparing it with that of Dostoevsky. Philippe's cult of Dostoevsky took tangible form in the portrait of the Russian master that always hung on the wall of his room (with Tolstoy's added later—and a little lower). If the influence of Dostoevsky upon his writings evades documentation in such tangible fashion, Mr. Hemmings shows, nevertheless, that it was all the more important precisely because it was not limited to mere mechanical borrowing. "Dostoevski did Philippe an immense service in providing him with a monumental replica of himself," he declares. "Philippe rediscovered himself and found reaffirmation of himself in discovering Dostoevski, just as did his friend André Gide."

It was in the nature of things that Dostoevsky should occupy a somewhat smaller place than Tolstoy (apart from this long chapter on Philippe) in a study of their influence in France up to the year 1914, for Dostoevsky hardly came into his own among French readers until after World War I. Indeed, as Mr. Hemmings points out, he got off to a much poorer start than Tolstoy in France at the hands of both critics and translators; and, if the French reading public labored under a more distorted impression of Dostoevsky than might have been normally expected in so "abnormal" a writer, much of the responsibility rests upon Vogüé for his dismissal of everything after *Crime and Punishment* as evidence of his declining powers, and upon the translators who tinkered with such works as *The Brothers Karamazov* in the spirit of the advice given by a certain Professor Fleury. Writing in 1881 just after Dostoevsky's death, Jean Fleury had declared: "To be appreciated by the French public, Dostoevsky's novels would need to be recast and overhauled like certain German works of erudition."

For all his failure to come to terms with Dostoevsky's genius, however, Vogüé did redeem himself somewhat with this remarkable prophecy, quoted by Mr. Hemmings: "In fifty years' time, when the science of mankind has enforced on the general public the slow, inevitable revolution we are witnessing, when it will be necessary to expunge from dictionaries many old terms, the overnarrow meaning of which no longer corresponds to our present state of knowledge—and chief among them the words *mad, madness*—then it will be seen that this daring Russian probed many a problem which will be then, if not solved, at least frankly accepted by all." That prophecy, as we know, has long since been fulfilled.

The first part of Miss Lindstrom's work provides virtually a running commentary on Mr. Hemmings' discussion of Tolstoy. At times—for example, when she reproaches him for his silence about the great success in France of Tolstoy's play, *The Power of Darkness*—her criticism is scarcely warranted (after all, Mr. Hemmings wrote his book about the Russian *novel* in France); but for the most part her comments are a useful supplement and corrective to the broader study presented by Mr. Hemmings.

Perhaps the most significant contribution she makes in this part of her work lies in her treatment of Tolstoy's influence as a moralist, which gets considerably more attention in her book than in *The Russian Novel in France*. Mr. Hemmings has little patience with the various elements of Tolstoy's later thought that came to be known as "Tolstoyism"; he says of "this arid doctrine" that it is "essentially a philosophy for the satiated, designed to infuse moral vigor into the veins of a generation cloyed by too much security," and that "1914, in fact, rang down the curtain on Tolstoyism as on innumerable other phenomena surviving from the nineteenth century" (pp. 178, 193-194).

The very existence of this word "Tolstóyism" is a stumbling block to an understanding of Tolstoy's thought. By its mere presence, by its almost insidious con-

venience, it leads both those who use it and those who hear it to assume that all the various convictions coexisting in Tolstoy's mind—his belief in nonresistance to evil by violence, his ideas about art, his interpretation of Christianity, his rejection of the state, his asceticism and puritanism, his condemnation of bourgeois society, and all the rest—were intrinsic parts of a unified philosophy, logical corollaries of one fundamental principle. If it is true, however—as this reviewer believes—that many of the elements of "Tolstoyism" had no necessary relation outside of the mind of Tolstoy, this helps to explain why no thoroughgoing "Tolstoyan" movement could ever have lasted very long, and why those who attempted to adopt the whole of Tolstoy's personal set of convictions were so often accused of shallowness. But if "Tolstoyism" is too complex to be accepted *en bloc*, it is likewise too complex to be dismissed as casually as Mr. Hemmings dismisses it. The chances are slight that the rigors of life in the Hydrogen Age will lead to any drastic reappraisal of Tolstoy's views on art, or on sex, or even on vegetarianism; but it is not inconceivable that the rapidly diminishing returns on our progress in the science of blowing up enemies may yet lead to a re-examination of Tolstoy's thundering prophecies about societies and men who put their trust in military power.

Miss Lindstrom notes that the fundamental conflict between Tolstoy the moralist and Tolstoy the realistic artist had been pointed out very early by the young critic Émile Hennequin. She declares that French literature was influenced not so much by Tolstoy's artistic methods as by his message, and she attributes this to the fact that "le message du moraliste russe trouvait le terrain favorable dans un pays où une réaction contre le matérialisme appelait une renaissance des forces spirituelles." This approach leads her at times to very different conclusions from those of Mr. Hemmings. While his study of *Jean Christophe* leads him to assert that "Tolstoy's influence on Rolland's novel is . . . perceptible, but it is by no means extensive, and does not reach down to essentials," Miss Lindstrom declares that "au terme de son évolution, Jean-Christophe nous apparaît comme le digne représentant de l'idéologie tolstoïenne—peut-être unique dans la littérature moderne." In their discussion of Tolstoy's controversial work, *What Is Art?*, the two writers agree in their general appraisal of its reception among the leading French critics; but Miss Lindstrom goes on to show how Tolstoy's eminently social conception of the role of the artist coincided with, and to some extent influenced, the French reaction in the 1890s against the excesses of symbolism. In a chapter devoted to "Le Réveil moral" she calls attention to Tolstoy's influence upon such French efforts at "moral reconstruction" as *L'Union pour l'action morale*, which was founded in 1892 by a group of young French idealists under the leadership of Paul Desjardins; and in a less impressive chapter on "La Conscience de la collectivité" she points out some parallels between Tolstoy's criticism of bourgeois society and that of such French writers as Charles Péguy, Georges Sorel, and the group of the Abbaye de Créteil.

While agreeing with Mr. Hemmings that the influence of "Tolstoyism" in France was of relatively short duration, Miss Lindstrom attributes this not alone to the nature of Tolstoy's doctrines but also to the historical situation in France and the nature of cultural borrowing in general:

"L'humanitarisme de l'écrivain russe fut d'autant mieux accueilli qu'il coïncidait avec les préoccupations sociales et esthétiques de l'époque française qui nous intéresse . . . Pourtant il faut admettre ceci: le tolstoïsme n'a été accepté en bloc par personne en France. Chacun a considéré le plan artistique, social ou religieux qui lui convenait. On ne peut même pas affirmer que les idées fondamentales propres à ces divers plans aient été agréées dans leur totalité. Des idées particulières ont été prises par des individus isolés qui ne s'y arrêtèrent d'ailleurs que pour une durée

limitée, s'y opposant violemment ou les utilisant—quand ils n'y reconnaissaient pas simplement une coïncidence encourageante—comme une heureuse transition dans la construction de leurs théories" (pp. 88-89).

The second half of Miss Lindstrom's work deals with the impressions of Tolstoy that were brought back to France by French visitors to Russia. While this section of the book has so little connection with the first part that either of them might have been issued separately, it brings together an interesting and valuable collection of firsthand impressions of Tolstoy and his family as they were seen by a wide variety of French visitors, among whom were specialists in Slavic affairs, men of letters, pacifist intellectuals, and journalists.

The Russian Novel in France is broader in scope and more unified than *Tolstoï en France*, and Mr. Hemmings' engaging style succeeds in charming away the reader's awareness that he has a doctoral dissertation before him. Nevertheless, Miss Lindstrom's work is an indispensable supplement to the substantial portion of Mr. Hemmings' study that deals with Tolstoy; and she reveals a knowledge of Russian source materials on Tolstoy which is not clearly evidenced in Mr. Hemmings' work, and which might have made him less categorical in some of his statements about Tolstoy, such as his implication that he was little more than a narrow Russian nationalist and his assertion that "Tolstoy was calamitously limited in his outlook on non-Russian culture" (p. 211). Taken together, the two works make a significant contribution to an aspect of comparative literature that is of great importance and that has never been treated before in anything approaching this thoroughness.

WILLIAM B. EDGERTON

Pennsylvania State University

DIE SAGE VON HEINRICH DEM LÖWEN. IHR URSPRUNG, IHRE ENTWICKLUNG UND IHRE ÜBERLIEFERUNG. By Karl Hoppe. Bremen-Horn: Walter Dorn Verlag, 1952. 124 p. (Schriften des Niedersächsischen Heimatbundes E. V., neue Folge: Band 22.)

Within less than a century after the death of the historical Henry the Lion, Duke of Brunswick, in 1195, a legendary Henry and his wholly legendary lion had perhaps already become subject matter of a story said to have maintained itself in oral tradition in Brunswick up to the present time. The legend of Henry the Lion constitutes in its several branches an important group among the stories of a type widespread in the Middle Ages, which is sometimes called the Heimkehrende Gatte or Husband's Return. The husband after long absence returns home, often by miracle, just in time to keep his wife from marrying again. In the Brunswick legend a faithful lion which he has acquired (another important mediaeval motif) accompanies him on his return. The Brunswick legend has been treated in half a dozen languages, in forms that range from the ballad to the long metrical romance. Hoppe's study is intended to show the origin of the legend and the stages of its development.

Alone among faithful-lion stories, the Brunswick legend in some of its versions ends with the lion dying of grief on its master's grave and being honored by a commemorative statue. This peculiarity convinces Hoppe that the Brunswick lion story did not have a literary origin in such older stories of lions as Androcles'. Also he makes a good case to show that the story did not have a verbal origin as an explanation of Henry's being called the Lion, but that, on the contrary, what had been in effect almost a family surname came to be Henry's personal designation among historians because of the popularity of this legend among the common people. Hoppe thinks the story took its origin from a tangible object, a handsome

metal statue of a lion, larger than life, which Henry caused to be erected in Brunswick in 1166 and which still stands there. (A picture of it is the first plate in the book.) Folk imagination, as Hoppe supposes, gave this statue an aetiological explanation in oral legend as a statue of a lion that had really existed and had stood in such a relationship to Henry as to deserve commemoration.

Hoppe conjectures that the original explanation of how the hero came to have a faithful lion arose from Henry's pilgrimage to the Holy Land, in real life a later event than the erection of the statue. The journey was a peaceful pilgrimage, but in the course of it Henry is said to have received two leopards as a gift; and Hoppe thinks that the idea of travel to the Holy Land was so intimately associated with the idea of fighting there against the infidels that the lion was explained as a gift from a grateful heathen prince whose life Henry had spared in single combat. A defeated pasha gives him a lion in a version collected from oral tradition in the nineteenth century. Originally the legend would have been a story of Henry and his lion, with no Husband's Return. This theory is plausible enough, but possibly Hoppe displays an excess of certainty that now, half a millennium or so later, he has reconstructed precisely the simple artless folk tale that was to become the rather different and much more complicated Brunswick legend.

It is characteristic of Hoppe's confidence that he feels able to say that this account of how Henry got his lion was displaced in the first half of the thirteenth century in a hypothetical Low German work, which he calls the *ältere Ballade*, whose existence and content can be determined with considerable certainty, he believes, from the later versions. Hoppe thinks its author took the radical step of combining the simple early story of Henry and his lion with a different story altogether, the Husband's Return, using some early form of a pious Return story connected with the name of St. Thomas, extant now (except as we have it in the Brunswick legend) only in the *Moringerlied* and a version by Caesarius of Heisterbach. In the process of combining two hypothetical stories into a third hypothetical story, the hypothetical author made some changes; most notably, he provided for a hindrance to the Husband's Return by having Henry lose, rather than win, his fight with the infidel prince, be taken into captivity, and escape only to wander lost in the wilderness. If the Return story being adapted did not have a hindrance, the author's supplying one was a more remarkable contribution to the Burnswick legend and perhaps to other mediaeval Returns than Hoppe suggests; for the hindrance was there in the first of Return stories, the *Odyssey*, and a hindrance to explain the delay is almost an essential feature of the plot. Having Henry lose the fight involved sacrificing the idea that the lion was a gift of gratitude from his opponent, and Hoppe thinks that for a substitute the author then borrowed the account that was to become standard in the Brunswick legend: Henry comes upon the lion fighting with a dragon or serpent in the wilderness, helps it, and has thereafter its grateful and devoted companionship. This is the story Chrétien had told of Yvain and Yvain's lion. Hoppe believes his author's immediate source was Hartmann's *Iwein*, but he makes no attempt to establish the route of influence.

The content of the hypothetical older ballad Hoppe determines from a study of the Danish and Swedish Brunswick ballads, which he thinks were modeled after it. The Danish ballads have the peculiarity, for example, that Henry identifies himself to the bridegroom by the scars of his wounds, and Hoppe concludes that therefore their model must have had the scar scene. The date of the older ballad Hoppe determines from the date assigned to the wood carving on an Icelandic church door (previously adduced by H. Schneider in *Die Gedichte und die Sage von Wolfdietrich*); Hoppe is convinced that, because one of the scenes seems to show the lion dying on a grave, the carving illustrates the Brunswick lion story rather than any other.

Hoppe believes that the older ballad was the source of a few extant members of the Brunswick cycle and also of another hypothetical Low German *jüngere* ballad of the fourteenth century, from which he supposes that most of the extant versions are indirectly derived, always through a lost intermediary version. In it Henry's defeat in combat was eliminated (and the combat along with it), as being insufficiently conducive to the hero's glory. For the hindrance to the Husband's Return, the second ballad borrowed on more than one occasion in its history from the marvelous Oriental adventures of Herzog Ernst, which had the additional advantage of being suited to the coarsening taste of the times for less pious adventure stories.

Hoppe summarizes and classifies into groups the extant and hypothetical versions. He gives a series of detailed analyses of the story as he thinks it was with the new modifications of each stage of its development. If perhaps overdetailed and extremely definite in the reconstruction of what must after all be largely conjectural, these are nevertheless carefully reasoned and often convincing. He offers much that is ingenious and novel, but unprovable. The study ends appropriately with the elaborate stemma which is the natural conclusion to the kind of work it is.

Without saying so, Hoppe has limited his study, perhaps to its disadvantage, by excluding from consideration the relationships of the Brunswick legend to other stories except where it is clear that the Brunswick legend has borrowed. He does not mention the mediaeval stories of a lover (especially, in English, of Horn) who, like Henry, secretly identifies himself to the bride at a wedding feast by the ring dropped into the cup. Nor does he mention the stories of a crusader who, though not returning to prevent a marriage, nevertheless, like Henry, is miraculously transported home from the Holy Land. There are other mediaeval Heimkehrende Gatte stories besides those Hoppe mentions, other stories of identification by tokens, other stories of lions that could be compared with the story of the Brunswick lion (in particular, the lions in the Wolfdietrich poems). Hoppe has also limited his scope by passing over in silence the now rather extensive French and English scholarly literature regarding the history of faithful-lion stories, to which the study of *Yvain* has given rise.

There are seven plates and an illustration in the text, twelve pages of notes, and an *Anhang* of fifty pages giving the texts of the versions that are most important for a study of the interrelationships. An index has not been supplied. The book is handsomely produced.

C. R. B. Combellack

Athens, Greece

Folk Tales from Korea. Collected and Translated with an Introduction by Zong In-Sob. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952. xxviii, 257 p.

As early as 1279, a collection of literary antiquities of three kingdoms (Silla, Koguryo, and Paekche) in Korea, the *Samguk yusa*, was published by Great Priest Illyon (1206-1289). This book, the most important of its kind in the history of Korean literature, not only treats anecdotes and hearsay pertinent to Buddhism in more than 150 tales, but also preserves the original texts of fourteen old Korean poems. The primary purpose of the compilation was to preserve the indigenous culture of Korea and thus make it available to posterity. Mr. Zong, an ardent student of folk culture, had the same view in mind in gathering and translating ninety-nine folk tales. The only difference between the two collections is this—while the former had only a Chinese-reading audience, the latter is accessible to all English-speaking people. Mr. Zong has made a considerable contribution, both in bringing to the attention of the reader a rapport between Eastern and Western cultures and in revealing the true quality of oral literature in Korea.

On the other hand, he disappoints us by slipping into the usual carelessness of folklorists—he does not inform us from whom he collected tales. I remember as a child my grandmother hiring a shaman priestess to tell us tales. The priestess had an animated style, and was at times so possessed with spirits that she had to pause between sentences and phrases; the common point of reference in her stories was that the spirits, either good or evil, could be moved by songs and prayers. A Buddhist priest also visited us in autumn, leaving us tales which stayed in our memory for the whole winter. His style was fluid; he told his tales in a pensive mood, slowly, giving every sentence twice. A country woman selling mugworts and rhubarb in April also left us fragments of *Märchen*. Her tales were often uninteresting, mere skeletons of motifs; she did not know how to cement the motifs with her own imagination.

It is important then to know something about the raconteur—sex, age, and profession. Such knowledge helps us to study the quality of narrative style of a tale and, in fine, its meaning. It would also have been interesting to know Mr. Zong's method of recording—whether he wrote from memory after a tale had been told, whether he wrote while the raconteur told it slowly, or whether he had to mobilize his imagination to fill in the gaps of an incompetent narration from his knowledge of folk tales in general.

The book also suffers from the oversimplification of genres. The stories are grouped under five headings: myths, legends, fairy tales, fables, and old novels. First of all, Mr. Zong's definition of myth is not clear: "Those tales which describe the creations of the world and natural beings." A myth, to my mind, should not only tell of sacred beings or the origin of all things through the agency of the supernatural, but should be given religious significance; for myths are closely aligned with the religious beliefs and practices of a people. Mere etiological stories, such as why the ant has a slender waist or why the bedbug is so flat or the louse has a spot on his back (Nos. 16, 20), are not myths. Again, "The Sun and the Moon" (No. 3), one of the most famous fairy tales of all, "The Seven Stars of the North" (No. 5), and "The Jewel of the Fox's Tongue" (No. 9) are *Märchen*. No. 22 is a fable; here an actual maxim is attached at the end of the story, and this is what distinguishes the story from other animal tales. Nos. 4, 6, 7, 14, 15, 18, 19, and 20 are *pourquoi* stories. I do not see why No. 21, which tells why one should not throw one's nails away, but put them in the chamber pot, is a myth.

Of course, there are many borderline cases. Slight modifications occur in a tale in the process of its dissemination. "The Mud-Snail Fairy" (No. 13), which is a *Sage* as Mr. Zong heard it at Onyang, has a happy ending when narrated by a maid at Seoul. The consideration of "the revolution in the history of the story," which can be detected upon a close examination of the patterns of motifs, is essential in the study of traditional stylistic traits, and of the patterns and forms, of devices and genres of the folktale. This is doubly significant for the literary scholar whose job is to trace not only the themes and their migrations, but also the origin and rise of literary genres.

In short, Mr. Zong is hardly a *comparatiste*. The hastily written introduction overlooks such questions as the dissemination of, and variation in, folk tales, and the relation of their different forms. The three *novelle* he included under "Old Novels" also demanded explanation. "The Story of Hong Kil-tong," a *novella* by Ho Kyom (d. 1618), and the "Story of Two Sisters, Rose and Lotus" (ca. 1650), a didactic *novella* which grew out of a real incident at the court, are examples of *novelle* absorbed into oral tradition. There is need for study of the interaction between oral and written literature.

In Korea, folk tales are still alive. In a remote village, women still have to go

to work beyond the mountains, not for buckwheat puddings, but for a few pounds of rice (No. 3); in a farmhouse near the Eastern Sea, mothers-in-law scold and reprove their daughters-in-law for trivial incidents; in the summer night, under the chestnut trees, children still talk about goblins who left the mallet of wealth (No. 64); in Seoul, naughty youngsters are warned by their mothers that the tiger is just around the corner (Nos. 3, 44, 45); in Kaesong, grandfathers are still preaching to their grandsons the "Canon of Filial Piety" (Nos. 5, 18, 25). This book should be a great joy to the general reader who desires to know something of social settings and customs of Korea.

We have not yet seen a complete classification of Korean folk tales according to types of motifs. The following motifs could be suggested: wicked magistrate motif, government examination motif, persecuted women motif, good wife motif, good son motif, goblin motif, geomancy motif, Taoism motif, and the like. Such a list of types and motifs would provide us with a convenient reference tool.

PETER H. LEE

Fribourg, Switzerland

OXFORD SLAVONIC PAPERS. Edited by S. Konovalov. Oxford: Clarendon Press. Vol. III (1952), 152 p. Vol. IV (1953), 158 p.

These two volumes of "articles, lectures and documents dealing ... with the languages, literatures, and history of Russia and other Slavonic countries" are part of a series initiated at Oxford in 1950. Within the compass of Slavic studies, the two volumes under review explore a variety of subjects ranging from Anglo-Russian relations in the seventeenth century (S. Konovalov) to comparative Slavic metrics (R. Jakobson), from early Russian art (W. Weidlé) to Soviet law (John H. Hazard), from the poetry of Lermontov (M. Bowra) to religious polemics in sixteenth-century Poland (S. Kot).

A considerable part of this material consists of hitherto unknown documents, brought to light and commented upon by specialists. Vol. III contains some unpublished letters of Alexander Herzen, written in 1848-50 and addressed mostly to the German publicist and poet, Georg Herwegh, or his wife. As E. H. Carr points out in an able introductory essay, the primary interest of this correspondence is "personal and psychological"—during the period covered by this collection of letters Herzen's relations with Herwegh were being subjected to an increasing strain because of the "passionate character" of Herwegh's friendship for Natalie Herzen. Much of the correspondence here made available reflects the mounting tension between the two men. Apart from these echoes of Herzen's family drama, one finds in the letters lively bits of literary gossip as well as pungent expressions of disenchantment with post-1848 France, which made the intransigent exile look back with weary nostalgia upon his native land, where it is still "possible to do something, *if only to delude oneself*" (p. 105).

An earlier phase of Slavic cultural history is illuminated by Stanislaw Kot's discussion of "three unknown Polish reformation pamphlets," reprinted at the end of the article. Professor Kot's analysis and the texts themselves yield interesting evidence of the inroads made by Protestantism among the Polish ecclesiastical hierarchy and, more generally, of the scope and tenor of the campaign against the Papacy in mid-sixteenth-century Poland. Some of the scathing attacks upon the Pope and the bishops have a "modern" ring. One of the principal charges levelled in the Reformation pamphlets against the Polish Catholic hierarchy is that of dual allegiance or, worse still, total subservience to a foreign power.

A student of diplomatic history will find much valuable material in S. Konovalov's blow-by-blow account in Vol. IV of three *démarches* which dominated the

Anglo-Russian relations in 1620-24—two English missions to Moscow and one Russian "embassy" to London. Professor Konovalov's narrative is based upon sixteen documents from the Public Record Office, which are appended to the paper.

Every Slavist will be interested in the information contained in the article by J. S. G. Simmons, and in the documentary evidence adduced by him, on the background of the first attempt to establish a "Slavonic Chair" at Oxford, in 1844. Apparently, the "first English plea for Slavonic studies" was prompted by several factors of varying importance and scope. These were the rise of Indo-European linguistics and the concomitant broadening of the Occidental scholar's field of vision, the growing awareness of Russian power, the controversy over educational philosophy between the "Tractarians" and the "Arnoldians," and, last but not least, the vigorous behind-the-scene efforts of an astute and learned Polish aristocrat, Count Walerjan Krasiński.

In the symposia under discussion the study of literature does not loom quite so large as it did in Vol. II of *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, which contained a brilliant essay by Isaiah Berlin on Tolstoy's philosophy of history, later reprinted in book form as *The Hedgehog and the Fox*. In Vol. III literary criticism is represented by Maurice Bowra's lucid and judicious discussion of Lermontov. Sir Maurice is more sympathetic to Lermontov than are some modern Russian critics and is more willing to credit the great Russian romantic with such qualities as artistic maturity and "masculine" vigor. Much of what the distinguished Oxford scholar has to say of Lermontov's poetic art and his complex personality is convincing enough. At times, however, he weakens his case somewhat by dubious claims. Thus, it is difficult to agree that "hardly any poets have written with quite this ease and self-effacing simplicity." For one thing, in the opinion of this reviewer, "simplicity," self-effacing or otherwise, is not a very helpful concept in dealing with a medium as artful and highly organized as poetry. For another, if by "simplicity" one means such tangible characteristics as terseness or "economy" of means, the term is applicable exclusively to the chastened, "realistic" poems of Lermontov's late period. The bulk of Lermontov's poetry, with its romantic grandiloquence and its spectacular imagery, scarcely warrants such a description.

Philological considerations receive their due in the article by V. Kiparsky on "The Early Contacts of the Russians with the Finns and the Balts" (Vol. III) and in R. Jakobson's impressive foray into Slavic metrics (*ibid.*), where methods of comparative folklore are brought to bear on the problem of Primitive Slavic verse forms. The point of departure for this discussion is provided by the Serbo-Croatian epic decasyllable (*epski deseterac*). Jakobson shows conclusively that this verse pattern, often regarded as peculiar to Serbian folk poetry alone, has close counterparts in Western Slavic and in the Russian oral tradition. A masterful analysis of the close affinities, as well as some divergences, between the *epski deseterac* and Russian epic verse points clearly toward a common Slavic prototype, apparently a variant or a modification of the metrical system prevalent in Indo-European oral poetry, as reconstructed by Antoine Meillet. Jakobson's formidable erudition and his analytical skill make this study a major contribution to the emerging field of comparative Slavic poetics, the viability of which Jakobson recently urged in *Harvard Slavic Studies*, I (1953).

While Jakobson seeks to reconstruct the metrical canon of early Slavic poetry, W. Weidlé probes with his usual sensitivity the stylisic pattern of visual arts in mediaeval Russia (Vol. IV). Weidlé cautions agains overestimating the Byzantine impact on early Russian art. The Russian *Kunstwollen*, he argues, modified significantly the Byzantine model and in so doing nearly converged with some of the trends in Western art. According to Weidlé, this is especially striking in the realm of church architecture. The "shift of emphasis from the inward to the out-

ward aspect of the building" and "dynamic verticalism" discernible in mediaeval Russian church architecture have a distinctly Occidental, quasi-Gothic quality. These affinities suggest to Weidlé the following conclusion: "the study of early Russian art thus seems to show that the whole cultural history of mediaeval Russia should be examined within the context of a continuous line of parallel developments in Eastern and Western Europe" (p. 37).

All this, along with some contributions which have not been touched upon here, provides variegated and substantial fare. Anyone interested in Slavic studies will find in these volumes of *Oxford Slavonic Papers* much that will repay close scrutiny.

VICTOR ERLICH

University of Washington

OUTLINE OF COMPARATIVE SLAVIC LITERATURES. By Dmitry Cizevsky. Boston: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1952. 143 p.

Professor Cizevsky has carried out an exceedingly ambitious plan—to sketch the history of all Slavic literatures on the basis of a periodization which would be applicable to all Western literatures as well. He draws, largely from German *Geistesgeschichte*, a scheme modeled originally on art history; there is sequence of styles—Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Classicism, Romanticism, Realism, Symbolism—which pervade Europe and can be seen also in the Slavic world. Mr. Cizevsky is careful to point out the difficulties of application to Slavic literatures, the uneven spread of styles among the various Slavic literatures, the political and social conditions which delayed or prevented their acceptance, etc. Still he comes to the conclusion that "the *complete* divergence of the individual national literary fields was hindered in a real sense by the membership of the Slavic literatures in a wider unity of European literature" (p. 12). At some points Mr. Cizevsky has to modify the scheme by criteria drawn substantially from local history; he thus gives special treatment to the Hussite movement and the Muscovite literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He allows also for subdivisions: within Romanticism for the "Natural" school headed by Gogol, and for what he calls Slavic *Biedermeier*, and within Realism for Impressionism under which Tolstoy and Chekhov are listed.

On the whole Mr. Cizevsky succeeds in demonstrating the applicability of the scheme to the Slavic world. He characterizes the main periods and he enumerates all the prominent authors in all the Slavic literatures, giving brief characterizations and listing their foremost books. The little volume is richly suggestive and extremely meritorious as a first attempt to treat the whole history of all Slavic literatures as a unity passing through the main styles of general European literature. The pages on the Baroque period, especially, will strike every reader as persuasive and substantially new.

One can make only one criticism of the book; it is, as the author himself realizes, far too short. In about 135 pages of text, Mr. Cizevsky has to settle the theoretical problem of periodization, to characterize the main periods, and to write what amounts to an outline of the whole literary history of a large group of nations. The result could not be other than extremely schematic. But this is a fault Mr. Cizevsky could hardly avoid under the circumstances. In his many previous writings he has demonstrated an intimate knowledge of many texts and problems of all periods and literatures of the Slavic world. He has written, to mention only a part of his work, importantly and fully on the history of Old Russian literature, on the Czech seventeenth-century philosopher Komenský, on the eighteenth-century Ukrainian mystic, Skovoroda, on the Slovak revival around 1848, and most fully on the in-

fluence of Hegel in Russia, and, in many contexts, on his two favorite authors, Gogol and Dostoevsky. Thus the feeling that in the little book under review we are sometimes watching a dance of bloodless categories, or that we see a large number of authors mercilessly forced into pigeonholes, must be always rectified by recourse to Mr. Cizevsky's other writings, which are richly concrete, full of detailed analyses of styles and ideas.

In this sketch Mr. Cizevsky has not escaped the dangers of the method of *Geistesgeschichte*. While he is, to my mind, right in rejecting the excessive nominalism of most recent scholars, especially in the empirically minded Anglo-Saxon world, who would minimize or deny the whole problem of periodization, Mr. Cizevsky has succumbed to the temptation of reifying his categories, of speaking of Baroque or Realism as if they were entities existing outside the minds and writings of men, or institutions demanding allegiance. In his introductory reflections, he appeals to Max Weber's plastic concept of the "ideal type," but, in the body of the book, he falls into misleading rigidities of terminology. Thus Rževskij, we are told, "has gone over to the Baroque a short time before," and Deržavin "soon turned to the pre-Romantic movement" (pp. 68-69). Elsewhere a universal stylistic device becomes the moving power of nineteenth-century Realism: " 'Metonymy' led to *milieu*-description, to the representation of 'development,' to the education of the heroes, to the portrayal of their genealogy, of their circle of intimates" (p. 105). Rousseau and Goethe, two highly metaphorical writers who used the same themes long before, are forgotten. At times the shorthand of the author becomes almost meaningless; one has to have a firsthand knowledge of the writer discussed to guess what Mr. Cizevsky could mean when he says, e.g., that "modernist motifs are already found in J. Zeyer" (p. 115), or that Karásek ze Lvovic was rather more "radical than decadent" (p. 127), especially as we are told nothing else about these Czech authors.

Can Dostoevsky be classified under Realism (p. 105) when the general description of Realism expressly excludes the grotesque and hyperbole and thus does not fit him even remotely? Can Tolstoy be called an Impressionist (p. 110) when we are told before that in Impressionism the scope of the epic work contracted to short stories and sketches? What is left of the term Realism if it includes the Czech poet Jaroslav Vrchlický (p. 115), whose affinities are with the early Hugo, with Musset and Carducci? Especially in the nineteenth century the broad categories used seem almost meaningless in their abstractness and generality. Little is achieved if we classify the literature of the last 150 years, the richest in the history of the Slavic nations, under three or even four or five headings.

But we have not said anything that Mr. Cizevsky would not know himself. One could only ask him to write a book ten times the length of this sketch, which would do justice to the individuality of the writers and their works. But then one pauses: Can such a project be carried out otherwise than precisely in such very general terms? The life of history is the detail of its individuality and change, and all categorizing serves only as orientation. Mr. Cizevsky may have done all that can be done with the question. He has given us an accurate, though exceedingly small-scale map of Slavic literature; it is like the perspective from an airplane in which people and even towns become invisible.

R. W.

SPIEGELUNGEN DER SCHWEIZ IN DER DEUTSCHEN LITERATUR, 1870-1950. By Albert Bettex. Zürich: Max Niehans Verlag, 1954. 223 p.

In this fascinating book Dr. Bettex, well known for his *Der Kampf um das klassische Weimar* (Zürich, 1935) and *The German Novel of Today* (Cambridge,

1939), has uncovered a wealth of material which in its width and its depth is all but amazing to the casual observer of the German-Swiss literary scene. We all know of the close relationship with Switzerland of authors like Nietzsche, George, Rilke, or Ricarda Huch—but by delving far beyond first- and second-rate authors into a maze of German literary material dealing with Switzerland, Dr. Bettex is able to measure the full impact of the Alps, the people, and the democracy of Switzerland upon Germany—an impact far stronger in its rich germinating effects than the smallness of the country would seem to warrant. In spite of his absolute command of numberless minor sources of information, Dr. Bettex is always careful to emphasize the more important trends and names in the up and down of German-Swiss relations, and the result is a book that is a joy for any comparatist. About the only flaws this reviewer could find concern the unusually difficult style, which is full of those ponderous participial constructions which make the German langauge so unpalatable abroad—and a certain imbalance of pro- and anti-Swiss statements—many of the latter (e.g., by Keyserling) are relegated to the notes.

After a relatively unimportant first chapter on Switzerland as a "Ferienland" in the "Modeliteratur" of Germany between 1870 and 1914 (the Engadin!), we plunge into a first great problem—Switzerland as the home of democracy and genuine individual freedom, an aspect which inspired Young Germans (Freiligrath) no less than early socialists and naturalists (Hauptmann). Ricarda Huch and many others are mentioned in connection with the University of Zürich, the first in Germany-speaking lands to admit women; Wedekind is given a prominent place among those who despise the Swiss because of their alleged philistinism or because they give shelter to bohemians, pacifists, radicals, anarchists, and other "Reichsfeinde."

The three climaxes in the reflection of Switzerland in German literature are discussed in chapters III, IV, and VI: "Das Menschenbild des Realismus und die schweizerische Wesensart," "Die neuidealistischen Bewegungen und die Schweiz," and "Die Schweiz und die Idee der Ganzheit." There is ample material on the manifold German echoes of authors like Pestalozzi, Gotthelf, Keller, Meyer, and Spitteler, of scholars like Burckhardt, Bachofen, Forel, and Jung, of artists like Böcklin, Hodler, and Stauffer—and what they meant and gave to their German contemporaries in their hour of need. Chapters V and VII shift the accent from the men and the mountains of Switzerland to the political traditions and ideals of the country; they deal with the German-Swiss relations during World War I and with the nadir of the entire period, the deterioration of these relations during the National Socialist regime. There are discussions of the importance of Swiss publishers who helped to stymie the efforts of German censorship from Herwegh up to Schickele and beyond; of Marxists, Dadaists, and ardent idealists among the thousands of refugees; of the significant role (in addition to the Germans mentioned above) of authors like Schäfer, Flake, Burte, Hesse, Thomas Mann, Stefan Zweig, Hofmannsthal, Vischer, and Kolbenheyer; of the symbolical value of the intellectual leadership, at a given moment, of Zürich, Basel, Bern, Dornach, or Davos; of the importance of French and Italian Switzerland; of the hour of Geneva and the League of Nations in the cultural life of Germany; of the reflection of Helvetia as "Das Wunderland des Friedens," "Das kulturelle Kleineuropa," the incarnation of the "Ganzheit des Menschen" and of the "Ganzheit der Volksgemeinschaft."

It is most reassuring to see from all these discussions that the international significance of Swiss literature, landscape, and mentality, important since the days of Haller, Bodmer, and Mme de Stael, has not receded during the past century; in fact, with regard to Germany, Switzerland has assumed an importance which can hardly be matched by any other small nation in Europe. Many quota-

tions could be adduced to indicate the ever-present impact of Switzerland upon the political, social, and literary thoughts of leading Germans, from the grateful appreciation of Goethe ("Mir ist's wohl, daß ich ein Land kenne wie die Schweiz ist. Nun geh mir's wie's wolle, hab ich doch immer da einen Zufluchtsort") to the subtly anti-German insinuations of Thomas Mann ("Die Schweiz ist das Land, wo auf deutsch das wohltuend Undeutsche gesagt wird. Darum liebe ich sie"). But among all these, we might underscore just one, in order to explain why Switzerland, the fountainhead of democracy and of a sturdy middle class, became also the country which inspired individual greatness and the will to quality and titanism. This can be seen, not only in certain Swiss authors whom Albert Bettex calls "die Verherrlicher des starken Lebens" (Burckhardt and Spitteler), but also in Germans like Nietzsche and George—and it was Nietzsche who pointed to the significant connection between his philosophy and the Alpine peaks of Switzerland: "Wer die Luft meiner Schriften zu atmen weiß, weiß, daß es eine Luft der Höhe ist, eine starke Luft. Das Eis ist nahe, die Einsamkeit ist ungeheuer—aber wie ruhig alle Dinge im Licht liegen! Wie frei man atmet: Wieviel man *unter* sich fühlt!—Philosophie, wie ich sie bisher verstanden und gelebt habe, ist das freiwillige Leben in Eis und Hochgebirge."

W. P. F.

LA POESÍA POSTMODERNISTA PERUANA. By Luis Monguió. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1955. 253 p.

Es difícil asomarse a un libro sobre poesía postmodernista sin un poco de antagonismo. ¿Seremos ya historia los que éramos presente ayer nomás? Gracias a la pluma ágil y delicada de Luis Monguió, el trabajo de disección tiene en el caso de *La poesía postmodernista peruana*, y afortunados los peruanos por ello, un aire más liviano y un ritmo casi musical. No es que le falten al libro las notas, la bibliografía y el orden riguroso de la investigación científica. De hecho el método de este libro debería ser modelo de trabajos académicos. El autor ha distinguido períodos y tendencias con la sencillez de una inteligencia serena. Todo aquí está encajado en su lugar, visto con equilibrio de historiador y sensibilidad de crítico.

Se empieza con una acertada definición de las peculiaridades peruanas del *modernismo* y una descripción de su agotamiento, que corresponde más o menos al período que Federico de Onís ha llamado *postmodernismo Un estudio detallado* del *vanguardismo*, el *ultramodernismo* o *ultraísmo* de Federico de Onís, se enfoca muy claramente en sus relaciones con los movimientos europeos de vanguardia, prestando igual atención a la introducción de modalidades extranjeras y su cambio en el Perú. De aquí en adelante la trayectoria se complica. Los tres últimos capítulos del libro tratan de deslindar, dentro de una contemporaneidad reciente, tendencias que designa Monguió con los nombres de *nativismo, poesía social* y *poesía* pura. Es que el común denominador histórico de un momento tan reciente es imposible de definirse. En cada una de estas tendencias se estudian detalladamente los representantes de importancia.

Quizá haya un abuso del título de poeta, abuso del que se quejaba ya Abraham Valdelomar, según cita del propio Monguió (p. 50). Se podría ahorrar unas páginas sencillamente con un olvido generoso de algunos nombres. Pero, apresurémonos a decirlo, es de lo más acertado en el libro el darle a César Vallejo un puesto único y el mayor número de páginas de entre tantos poetas. Por desgracia, el autor no nos da un estudio completo de Vallejo, ya que lo ha hecho en otras publicaciones. Pero aun así, la lectura comentada de algún poema, como el poema II de *Trilce* (pp. 70-73) no revela sus capacidades de exégeta. Gracias a lecturas

como ésta el libro adquiere una variedad e interés raros hoy en día en trabajos de investigación.

Sin duda hay defectos en el libro. En defensa de la lengua, digamos que nos es incomprensible que un escritor de la casticidad y elegancia de Luis Monguió se deje tentar por palabras como "pionero" (p. 57), "lidereaba" (p. 124, oh, sí, ya tenemos líderes an español, pero¿ quién quiere oírlos liderear?), "telescopado" (p. 179). Nos extraña asimismo que en este libro el nombre de Juan Ramón Jiménez aparezca sólo tres veces y sin mención de su influencia directiva en la época postmodernista. Y eso que Georgina Hübner nació y murió en el Perú. Quizá quede para otro investigador el dilucidar la función de la poesía de Juan Ramón, que por influencia o por oposición o como obsesión anda muy dentro de nuestros poetas del siglo XX. Es más de extrañar esta omisión si se observa la extraordinaria habilidad de Luis Monguió para concentrar la esencia de estudios no hechos todavía en unas pocas palabras, por ejemplo, en el caso de D'Annunzio y Valdelomar (p. 30), un tema de literatura comparada que merece estudio aparte y que está delineado con perfección en unos renglones.

Muchas sugerencias hallará el estudioso, y siempre acompañadas de una valoración concisa y justa del problema. Es que Luis Monguió ha vivido íntimamente las contradicciones, las esperanzas, los triunfos de una época poética vigorosa del Perú y nos da en *La poesía postmodernista peruana* una interpretación alerta de todas sus variedades. La comprensión y la simpatía del autor son tan valiosas como su erudición y exactitud.

BERNARDO GICOVATE

University of Oregon

ENSAYOS SOBRE LITERATURA LATINOAMERICANA. By A. Torres-Rioseco. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953. 209 p.

Este conjunto de dieciséis ensayos de distinta longitud e importancia pasa con acierto y elegancia de temas locales a cuestiones generales de literatura hispanoamericana y a problemas universales de estética y sociología. Es difícil encontrar el hilo de unidad que rige la mente del autor en la selección de temas, porque la unidad aquí consiste más que en el parentesco superficial o la derivación histórica, en un interés primordial que si no rige, al menos diríamos que dirige la pluma de Torres-Rioseco tanto en este volumen de ensayos como en sus valiosas producciones anteriores que han desbrozado el campo harto enmarañado de los estudios latinoamericanos.

Esta actitud, esta meta o misión, se cristaliza más que nada en la búsqueda de una definición de la cultura y el hombre hispanoamericanos. Aun la minucia erudita contribuye su partícula a la formación de un complejo sistema de valores vagamente americanos que se han ido acumulando en los últimos años gracias a los esfuerzos de estudiosos de todos nuestros países. Hoy se empieza el trabajo de clarificación y definición, un paso más hacia la madurez cultural, y a éste, como a todos nuestros progresos recientes, contribuye Torres-Rioseco no sólo en "Categorías literarias," sino también entre líneas en varios otros ensayos de este libro.

Además de sus definiciones de categorías literarias en Latinoamérica—que se reducen para Torres-Rioseco a dos: *el interés social* y *la honradez artística* o sea *la sinceridad en el arte*—las "Consideraciones acerca del pensamiento hispanoamericano" plantean el problema fundamental de nuestra realidad cultural histórica: "¿Tenemos algún rol que cumplir en la civilización que no pueda ser satisfecho por el hombre de otras partes?" (p. 182).

De aquí pasemos a los ensayos de historia literaria general de América. "La evolución social y la novela en México" es un estudio de las relaciones entre la

realidad histórica de la revolución mexicana y los moldes artísticos en que se ha encajado, mal o bien, este caos de sangre y de esperanzas. "El humorismo en la América Hispana" estudia obras de Genaro Prieto, Rubén Romero y Arturo Cancela después de introducir su tema del humor a través de Cervantes y los antecedentes coloniales y del siglo diecinueve en América. El cuadro visto en perspectiva histórica explica la naturaleza nueva del humorismo hispanoamericano. En "La novela en América" encontramos a la vez un comentario definidor y agudo del género y un programa para novelistas.

Basta para dar una idea de la variedad de ensayos mencionar que uno analiza la existencia del "Teatro indígena de México"—se pone de relieve aquí la necesidad de un estudio detenido y una revaloración de lo indígena en nuestra cultura—y otros dos estudian fenómenos coloniales de gran importancia: el teatro mexicano ("Tres dramaturgos mexicanos del período colonial") y el estado avanzado de la erudición y la crítica en la colonia a través de "El apologético en favor de don Luis de Góngora."

Varios ensayos además estudian escritores y fenómenos del modernismo. Entre ellos el de más aliento es "Las teorías poéticas de Poe y el caso de José Asunción Silva," que estudia no la influencia del poeta norteamericano en el colombiano, sino más bien, algo más sutil que podría llamarse el aprendizaje estético de Silva. Lo que seguirá siendo misterio es cómo el discípulo pudo producir, ateniéndose a los equivocados cánones del maestro, poemas tan superiores a los de Poe como el famoso "Nocturno" y "Ronda."

El ensayo sobre *Los raros*, por otra parte, ilumina el problema de la cultura literaria de Rubén Darío. No contento con esto, el autor analiza las sutilezas de la prosa del maestro y señala un tema fecundo para el estudioso futuro: la relación entre la prosa y el verso de Darío, mayormente el estudio de alusiones mitológicas y de recursos estilísticos que pasan de la prosa juvenil de Darío a su poesía de madurez. Son de señalarse también el admirable esfuerzo que rescata de la selva de ripios chocanescos los pocos poemas de José Santos Chocano que siguen teniendo vigencia en la lengua y el fino estudio de la poesía casi intangible de Xavier Villaurrutia.

Aparte de estos temas literarios, pero de un interés especial para nosotros, es el ensayo "Evasión y retorno" que, al comentar el libro de Juan José Arévalo, *La adolescencia como evasión y retorno*, plantea problemas de educación nuestros que se repiten por todo el mundo y que son hoy en día quizá más serios que nunca.

Aunque quizá fuese de más provecho para el lector añadir algún comentario o resumir otra idea de Torres-Rioseco, nos reservamos el último párrafo para presentar reparos nuestros. Cuando dice Torres-Rioseco que "sigue siendo el europeo frente al indio, dos culturas que no se han fundido ni se fundirán jamás" (p. 97), se nos subleva cierto optimismo sin razón y sin sentido y nos atrevemos a afirmar que si bien puede ser que no se fundirán jamás, al menos sostendremos que deben fundirse. Y por este camino volvemos a la pregunta fundamental: ¿Tenemos algún rol que cumplir que no pueda ser satisfecho por el hombre de otras partes? ¡Quién sabe! Pero tengamos o no tengamos nuestra misión en esta tierra, aquí estamos, y si no tenemos ninguna misión especial, pues la inventaremos.

BERNARDO GICOVATE

University of Oregon

BREVE HISTORIA DEL MODERNISMO. By Max Henríquez Ureña, Mexico City-Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1954. 544 p.

El modernismo hispánico se nos aparece más y más a medida que pasa el tiempo como el momento de mayor grandeza y de fracaso total en el mundo español. Su

importancia estriba más que en lo que produjo la mente hispánica desde 1882 hasta 1919, con todo y ser tan rico este período como cualquier otro en la historia nuestra, estriba diríamos en un ideal que no se realizó nunca pero que nos queda como herencia y como norte. Una mirada al índice general de esta *Breve historia del modernismo* nos revela el ideal y el fracaso. Se empieza con una "Ojeada de conjunto," luego un capítulo sobre "La poesía española al despuntar el modernismo," seguido de seis capítulos dedicados a las figuras mayores del modernismo. Obsérvese que se habla de ojeadas generales y de grandeza individual. De aquí en adelante, saltándonos un capítulo, "Historia de un nombre," al que volveremos inmediatamente, se sigue la evolución de la historia intelectual hispánica en distintos centros de América y en España.

He aquí el fracaso: aquella unidad intelectual conquistada en los albores del siglo XX se ha perdido. La fragmentación de la mente hispánica es ya un hecho. Lo extraño es que Max Henríquez Ureña, a pesar de ordenar su desordenado libro de acuerdo con la realidad histórica, no se da cuenta de que éste es el tema central de la historia del modernismo. De hecho, entonces, esta "breve historia" ni es breve ni es historia. Son quinientas y tantas páginas de excelente consulta, libro que no debe faltar en ninguna biblioteca de estudios, pero, por desgracia, solamente hallamos en él el armazón de datos necesarios para la historia genuina que nos dé la medida exacta de nuestros ideales y nuestros fracasos, que sea enseñanza y guía del futuro al través de un estudio del pasado.

Salvado el escollo, digamos que si el libro no se llamara historia sino panorama del modernismo, y no se metiera en tanto detalle inútil, no hubiéramos empezado con este reparo de mal humor. Puesto que como panorama es completo y necesario. Es más, esta *Breve historia del modernismo* nos da el libro indispensable que hemos venido pidiendo en los últimos años, el libro donde empezar a estudiar los múltiples problemas de detalle que se nos plantean a diario. Si se quieren estudiar las traducciones de los modernistas o las influencias de D'Annunzio, J. K. Huysmans, o quien sea, basta juntar los datos desparramdos por este libro para orientarse.

Aunque el libro está impreso con cuidado, se han deslizado algunos errores que importa corregir. Quizá sea de poca importancia que se dé como fecha de publicación de *Werther* 1775, en vez de 1774. En cambio, importa señalar que no es exacto que el tema de "A un poeta" de *Azul*... sea el de la "altivez varonil que no se rinde al femenil halago" (p. 209). Todo lo contrario, habla Darío en este poema de un "hombre-montaña encadenado a un lirio."

Tampoco se aquilata el valor de un poeta u otro, ni se estudian poemas con miras a descubrir lo esencial de su validez. Es cierto que éste no es el objeto del libro, pero precisamente por no hacerse un trabajo de exégesis y valoración cuidadosa se cae en el error de ensartar poetas y prosistas a carretadas tales que es difícil creer que en nuestra pobre América se haya hecho nada más que escribir y dirigir revoluciones. No entendemos, por ejemplo, que haya necesidad de trece páginas (331-344) para borrar a un poetastro de nuestro pasado.

De lo más interesante en el libro es el capítulo IX, "Historia de un nombre," que quizá debería haber sido el primero. En él se estudia el fenómeno curioso que convierte a una palabra peyorativa en estandarte de un movimiento y luego en rótulo de historia. Después de este capítulo, que sigue a las semblanzas de José Martí, Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera, Salvador Díaz Mirón, Rubén Darío, Julián del Casal y José Asunción Silva, se nos da un estudio detallado de la actividad intelectual en los centros hispánicos durante e inmediatamente después del modernismo. Sin brillo y sin ambición, Max Henríquez Ureña acumula los conocimientos indispensables para el estudioso futuro. Pero, cuando llega a España, en vez de un

panorama completo, nos da una visión un poco bizca, ya que no ocupa en el libro mucho mayor extensión el renacimiento de las letras españolas en el siglo XX (pp. 501-522) que la pobreza del modernismo en el Ecuador, Bolivia y Paraguay (pp. 364-379) y menos que la América Central sin Darío (pp. 380-411). No es justo por ejemplo rechazar de plano al prosista mayor de la lengua en los tiempos modernos con un párrafo (p. 507), acusando al creador de Sigüenza de escribir prosa sin emoción. No merecen los escritores españoles tal injusticia. Que aunque algunos de ellos, los peorcitos siempre, se empeñen en menospreciar los esfuerzos hispanomericanos, nosotros somos demasiado ricos para andar menoscabando grandezas españolas. Y no olvidemos las manos enlazadas, que fueron el símbolo de la "Biblioteca de definición y concordia" que inició Juan Ramón Jiménez con la reimpresión de *Visión de Anáhuac* en 1923. ¿Por qué no se menciona este libro en esta *Breve historia del modernismo*? Este es el punto culminante, después de Rubén Darío, del modernismo nuestro, el ideal nuestro, cumbre y también nuestro fracaso, ya que la "Biblioteca de definición y concordia" empezó y acabó con este libro. Y no hemos vuelto a ver aquellas manos enlazadas.

BERNARDO GICOVATE

University of Oregon

IL FIORE DEL VERSO RUSSO. By Renato Poggioli. Turin: Einaudi, 1949. 604 p.

CANTARE DELLA GESTA DI IGOR. A cura di Renato Poggioli. Turin: Einaudi, 1954. 239 p. (Nuova Collana di Poeti tradotti con testo a fronte, No. 4.)

Beside the great lyric poetry of Western and Central Europe has stood, for more than a hundred years, that of Russia, from Pushkin, Tyutchev, and Fet to Vyacheslav Ivanov and Blok. To many of us this poetry has been inaccessible; any serious attempt to acquaint us with it and to help us know it must be welcome. One of the most serious attempts is Poggioli's, the fruit of twenty-five years' labor. His anthology is the work of a poet and a historian, and an achievement that will long reward the most careful reading and rereading.

The poets who pass before us here are those from 1900 on—a time that has so rapidly become the past. Ending the procession, at the close of the book, come some of the ancestors from the previous century. Much has been written on what goes under the name of "symbolism." It was a European movement; great poets were part of it; the trends were many and varied; and there were numerous parallel and opposing trends. All this, in its Russian form, is strongly brought out here, both in the translations (among the best are those of Blok's verse and of Yesenin's "Pugachov") and in the 200 pages on the sociological background of the poems and the religious and philosophical climate from which they sprang. These pages, written by a scholar deeply versed in the literatures of several languages, are among the most important that have been given us on a strangely fascinating aspect of recent history.

What Poggioli has done in *Il fiore* for the last flowering of Russian verse is of rare merit; no less so his work on its "cradle song" (as Vyacheslav Ivanov called it), that grand and almost unique poem from the end of the twelfth century, before the time of Tatar rule. Using the text established by Roman Jakobson, he has translated, with modesty and brilliance, indeed with the art of a true poet, the *Lay of Igor's Host*. His introduction is a paradigm of interpretative criticism. Comparing the *Igor* with the *Song of Roland* and the *Cid*, he sets it apart from them as from most other epic poetry, and, behind the rich metallic color of its rhythms, makes out the features of the unknown poet. This is the

fourth volume in a new series of translations into Italian. The three preceding volumes were Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, Donne, and (also translated by Poggioli) Wallace Stevens.

HERBERT STEINER

Pennsylvania State University.

BLAKE: PROPHET AGAINST EMPIRE. By David V. Erdman. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954. xx, 503 p.

The primary contention of Professor Erdman is that the works of Blake, varied though they may be in subject matter, possess an intrinsic cohesion of pattern formed by the historic consciousness and journalistic inclination of the writer. In the concisely filled, carefully annotated pages of *Blake: Prophet Against Empire*, we are not in the presence of a precursor of nineteenth-century romanticism but of a poetic *philosophe* of the Age of Reason. Blake emerges as the poet of his time—in the sort of role that Voltaire tried so hard and so vainly to assume.

Professor Erdman examines the heretofore sacrosanct symbolism of Blake's poetry and of his engravings in the light of contemporary events and the jargon of the day. This is quite a departure from earlier critical appraisals of Blake, which, taking their cue from Arthur Symons, adhered to the view that in his very essence as poet Blake "sees all temporal things under the form of eternity."[1] Proceeding from this premise, the interpretation of Blake's allegories had previously been on a general moral plane, although the poet's interest in the historical events of his time has been recognized. Blake's ideas of liberty, deliverance, compassion, retribution, amity have been interpreted in broad symbolic terms, associated with classical allusions and Biblical meanings, rather than as immediate and direct political reactions. One might suggest that Blakes' first sponsors, the Symbolists and Pre-Raphaelites, who were themselves more at ease in a rarefied world, saw in him an embodiment of their notion that a poet must of necessity rise above the menial contemporary strife. Professor Erdman's representation of the poet-artist as a militant, often subversive partisan of republicanism, a disciple of Rousseau eager to reveal his stand on timely issues and clothing his political views in symbols often as an escape from censorship, constitutes a virtual rediscovery of the poet and a refutation of the belief in the essential otherworldliness of poets.

Symons discerned in a poem such as *Europe* only a mild scattering of contemporary allusions; Northrop Frye gave a broad treatment to the "mysterious symbolism," and Mark Schorer saw the innate radicalism of Blake seeking retreat in mysticism. Mr. Erdman takes the mystery out of the mysticism. In *The Four Zoas*, the most controversial of the long poems as to meaning and merit, Mr. Erdman ignores the alleged desire of Blake for succinctness and unravels its obscurity by tying up its message with that of the earlier poems, *America* and *Europe*. It becomes a day-to-day unfolding of historical events, a symbolic biography of the years 1799-1804. In this light, the work assumes a more complete and unified meaning than was previously attributed to it.

According to the author's explanation of historical and political references, the major poetic works and engravings carry a sustained theme with variations. From the first, Blake views kings, whether native or foreign, with alarm. He champions the emergence of the revolutionary spirit in America and France, believes it sustained by divine guidance, disapproves of England's entry into war to impede the French Revolution, hopes for universal liberation from tyrants, and in particular for England's freedom from the shackles of empire. In the decade after Waterloo,

[1] Arthur Symons, *William Blake* (New York, 1907), p. 78.

he is disappointed with England for not having taken up the principle of revolution. Accordingly, *Songs of Experience* would illustrate the dismal social effects of empire. At the turn of the century, Blake is disturbed by the public's deafness to his admonitions and prophecies of future disaster for the British Empire, but is consoled somewhat by a belief in an eventual, culturally fruitful marriage between England and France; his hope is lodged not in the reasonable future actions of the two countries but in the intervention of a divine providence. Even the alarm with which he viewed the subsequent aggressions of Bonaparte was tempered with continuing sympathy for France and persistent blame of England. Disappointed with the peace of 1814, he put his faith in an ultimate political paradise, as envisioned in the finale of *Jerusalem*, which would be brought about through the cultivation of the natural comradeship inherent in humanity.

Previously the emphasis has been on the psychological effect of Blake's milieu upon his writings. In the present study, psychology is subordinated to the concrete and direct illustrations of the successive inroads made by current events and idiom into the visions of the poet-artist.

An ambitious undertaking, it does not avoid all the pitfalls. The alleged historical references are sometimes too pat, and give the impression that Blake wrote and sketched, newspaper in hand. The line between conjecture and incontestable fact is not always clearly drawn. The historical data sometimes interrupt too abruptly the thread of the interpretation of the poetry. Elsewhere what is relegated to a footnote appears to have deserved inclusion in the main text.

However, the essential thing is that Professor Erdman has written an important and provocative book, and has provided a genuine example of craftsmanlike integration of historical and literary data. He has so fully immersed himself in the turbulent epoch in which Blake developed as man and artist that he has been able to reconstruct it on a national and international scale and to follow Blake patiently through work after work, engraving after engraving, as the poet-artist asserts, modifies, crystallizes his *Weltanschauung*.

In bringing out Blake's historical preoccupations, the author leaves unrefuted previous contentions that, where Blake's metaphors are merely cloaked ideas, they prove aesthetically wanting. Although Mr. Erdman draws no critical conclusions at the end of his study, he leaves us a twofold impression of Blake as a man unwilling and unable to live detached from the world of temporal events, yet possessing the power of assimilating and turning into material for artistic expression what he understood to be significant in the tides of history.

ANNA BALAKIAN

Syracuse University

DICHTUNGEN. By Ernst Stadler. Edited by Karl Ludwig Schneider. Hamburg: Verlag Heinrich Ellermann, 1954. 2 vols. 295, 410 p.

This attractively bound two-volume edition contains all of Ernst Stadler's poetry. In his introduction on the life and poetry of Ernst Stadler the editor points out why he includes the early poems, even those of 1902-04. (Like many another poet, Stadler eventually came to look on his early production with a jaundiced eye. He wrote practically nothing between 1905 and 1910; *Aufbruch* was finished in 1914.) "At first sight," Schneider declares (I, 53), "these early poems seem to have little connection with Stadler's later work; indeed, the question may well be asked: How did the author of these imitative products ever develop into the creator of *Aufbruch*?" This is a valid question, and one to which no ready answer can be given, partly because we can no longer trace the intermediary stages. Some of Stadler's work and much of his correspondence was lost, while in

the hands of friends, in the bombings of World War II. What remains, apart from the *Aufbruch* cycle and the essays and translations, is the uneven early production which marks Stadler's turning away from impressionism and neoromanticism. Much of it reminds one of the Rilke of the *Cornet*; some of it is George in a minor key, complete with—or without!—punctuation. But most frequently Hofmannsthal seems to be the model. Thus the playlet *Freundinnen* (1903), which takes its inspiration from Verlaine's sonnet, "Toutes deux regardaient s'enfuir les hirondelles," is, in form and diction, truly the sincerest form of flattery for the poet of *Der Tod des Tizian* (it is, in fact, quite properly dedicated to Hofmannsthal). As was the case with Hofmannsthal and with the young Rilke, Stadler's facility in poetic diction for a time outran his discipline and his mastery of form. Some of the early poems are conglomerations of adjectives of color and mood, and little else; there is a profusion of "lüstern zitternde Lianen," "blauumkränzte Weiten," and "vergilbte goldne Rahmen."

It marks Stadler's growth as a poet that he, too, like Rilke, in the end became suspicious of the "word." That surely is the meaning of the beginning lines of *Aufbruch*:

> "Man hatte uns Worte vorgesprochen,
> die von nackter Schönheit und Ahnung
> und zitterndem Verlangen übergiengen...
>
> Und langsam begannen die bunten Worte zu entblättern.
> Wir lernten sie ohne Herzklopfen sagen."

By the time Stadler had finished his great cycle, he had found his vehicle of expression (a Whitmanesque long line) and had left far behind the ennui, the necrophilia, and the saccharine eroticism of much of his generation.

The editor begins his introduction with the statement that, "wherever the lyrical literature of German expressionism is discussed, one will generally find Ernst Stadler mentioned, along with Georg Heym and Georg Trakl, as one of the chief exponents of that type of poetry" (I, 9). That is undoubtedly the case—but should it be? A perusal of the bulk of Stadler's work as it is here presented makes one wonder whether the conformity between these three poets actually goes deeper than the fact that they belonged to the same generation, and were all, in a fashion, expressionists. Perhaps also the manner in which they met their end has caused them to be considered as a definite literary group: Heym was drowned in 1912, Trakl took poison after a battle in 1914, Stadler fell the same year as an artillery lieutenant on the Western Front. At any rate, Jethro Bithell's caustic but not unjustified characterization of the other two, "Trakl is a decadent ten years after his time, as Baudelairian—and to the verge of nausea—as Heym is Rimbaud-like" (*Modern German Literature, 1880-1939*, p. 470), could not by any stretch of the imagination be extended to include Stadler.

Full justice is done in this edition to Stadler's other literary dimension, that of translator from the French. (Incidentally, the legend that Péguy and his translator Stadler faced each other in the trenches at Ypres in 1914 is demolished in the introduction.) The rendition of Jammes' *Quatorze Prières* is offered—as all translated poetry should be, surely—with the original facing the translation. The German title, "Gebete der Demut" (Humble Prayers), is indicative of the translation as a whole: the letter and, wisely, the meter have been changed, but the spirit is all there. Not included, presumably for reasons of space, is the translation of Péguy's essays and the *Balzac-Buch*, a rendition of several *contes* with an introduction (Strassburg, 1913).

Volume II contains several of Stadler's own essays and reviews, on his friend and fellow Alsatian René Schickele, on Werfel, Sternheim, and other

contemporaries. The professional Germanist—and Stadler was a good one, as Privatdozent in Strassburg—comes to the fore in an interesting essay on Kleist's *Penthesilea* and in an astonishingly dispassionate analysis of what Paul Heyse means to German literature, written on the occasion of Heyse's eightieth birthday in 1912. It is doubtful whether this little essay added to the ancient Nobel Prize winner's birthday cheer, but nothing has come to light in the meantime to make us wish to alter one word of that evaluation.

Stadler's correspondence, or that part of it which was available for publication here, makes rather profitless reading from a literary point of view. The letters deal mostly with travel plans, financial difficulties, and such matters. One minor but curious fact that emerges from the letters, however, is the discrepancy between Stadler's excellent French and his indifferent English. He was, after all, a Rhodes scholar who had repeatedly and for long periods of time lived in England, altogether perhaps longer than in France and Belgium. So it is odd to read, in a letter to Sir Francis James Wylie (the later warden of Rhodes House), that "this year has for me rather badly begun," but that, not long after breaking a leg, Stadler has been "making again the first attempts of walking" (II, 119). A helpful and, indeed, indispensable aid for the serious student of Stadler and of German expressionism as a whole is the bibliographical apparatus compiled by Schneider and Paul Raabe. It represents a difficult task well done, since many of the publications which first printed the early poems ceased to exist decades ago.

WOLFGANG LEPPMANN

University of Oregon

THE ENGLISH LEGEND OF HEINRICH HEINE. By Sol Liptzin. New York: Bloch, 1954. ix, 191 p.

DEUTSCHER GEIST UND ANGELSÄCHSISCHE GEISTESGESCHICHTE. By Klaus Dockhorn. Göttingen, 1954. 85 p. (Göttinger Bausteine zur Geschichtswissenschaft, Band 17.)

In a forthcoming book to be entitled *The Socratic Enigma*, Professor Herbert Spiegelberg of Lawrence College shows that the Western world (including Russia) has never ceased to try Socrates and to condemn or acquit him. Reading Professor Liptzin's account of Heine's reflection in the published utterances of the British people, and particularly the final chapter in which he repeats the crucial query, "And the real Heine?," I was reminded of that earlier figure in its impact on our civilization. The parallels, for all the differences in the two cases, are rather striking. Both men were accepted and rejected, not only in their native land but abroad, not only in their lifetime but long after their death. Both men elicited an extravagant response, and warm admiration is countered by violent antipathy. As the battle over Socrates has never ended, so Liptzin makes it appear likely that the phenomenon of Heine will never come to rest. And in both cases the basic reason is the same, or at least similar. Of Socrates we know only what Plato reported about him. The only certain knowledge we have is that he was forever challenging, calling in question, and refuting what others claimed to believe. Heine, to be sure, was extremely fond of expressing himself, and there is no lack of written material on which to base our judgment. But the result is not very different; this material is contradictory, and there was no chance while Heine lived of finding out where he actually stood. It is therefore not surprising that readers of his writings have continued to draw diametrically opposite conclusions regarding his personal opinions.

Drawing copiously on English (and some American) writers and magazines —I count some 180 names and titles in the index—and displaying an admirable objectivity as reporter, the author traces the devious course which the reputation of Heine has followed in British public utterances. His chapter headings outline the story: "Blackguard and Apostate" (Carlyle); "Martyr of Montmartre"; "Continuator of Goethe" (Matthew Arnold, George Eliot); "Hellenist and Cultural Pessimist" (Rossetti, Buchanan, Pater, James Thompson); "The Wandering Jew" (Zangwill); "Bard of Democracy" (William Sharp, Havelock Ellis, Dowden); "Citizen of the World." As late as 1944 Heine was quoted in the House of Commons as an authority on the German mind and a guide to present-day political policy.

I like Liptzin's answer to his own question in the final chapter. He says, in effect: What difference does it make? And he remarks quietly, "This legend of a strange seer and a brave warrior of the pen still excites and stimulates readers and writers of our day and still influences public opinion on burning issues of politics, society, and morality."

This book can be recommended as a well-documented and definitive study of one phase of Heine's international status before and since his death. I should now like to see the author undertake a still more difficult task, for which he is well equipped—that of sifting and lining up critical and public responses to Heine in the country of his birth. I know of no enigma in recent literature to compare with it in complexity and in baffling contradictions.

Klaus Dockhorn, who is thoroughly at home in the cultural—as distinct from belletristic—literature of both England and America, controverts a German view of the relationship between the two civilizations, which, beginning roughly with Fichte and Hegel and passionately espoused by Treitschke, stressed the differences between them to the point of antagonism—a view which is in some measure still endangering the political situation today. He points out the ways and forms in which, to an extent not fully realized in Germany, German thinking helped to develop in both Anglo-Saxon countries, especially in America, those trends which certain schools of historic thought in Germany now declare to be basically foreign and potentially destructive of German values. Instead of a static view of the contrasts which he does not deny or minimize, he proposes a dynamic concept which envisages a process of "Vorstoß and Verzögerung, gelungener Lösung und neuem Ausgreifen" (roughly, "thrust and lag, successful merging and new advance"). Thus it might be contended that American history writing is merely bringing back to Germany a byproduct of its own genius.

I find it deplorable, and self-defeating, that this writer employs a style which is a caricature of learned discourse. He could hope for more readers, and so for more effectiveness, if he wrote so that the intelligent layman could follow easily and with enjoyment. Sentences of inordinate length and complexity, cumbersome double adjectives ("idealistisch-historistisch," "naturrechtlich-universalistisch"), ugly Latinisms in great profusion ("szientifisch," "Rezeption," "Publizistik," "Position," "personalistisch," "verifizierbar," "Progress"), had on me such a repellent effect that only my obligation as reviewer made me overcome my reluctance to read on. Since the author's message is an important one, and much needed, I would hope that he might write it again in a more accessible form.

BAYARD QUINCY MORGAN

Stanford, Calif.

LUDWIG TIECK AND AMERICA. By Percy Matenko. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954. 120 p.

The chapter headings outline the contents: American Visitors and Tieck; Charles Follen (elsewhere called Karl); Tieck's Reception in American Magazines and Books Prior to 1900; American Translations of Tieck; Tieck and American Authors; Tieck, Poe and Hawthorne; Tieck's Attitude to America; Conclusions. An appendix lists American books in Tieck's library, and there is a bibliography of nine pages.

It appears that Tieck's work was at least known to a good many Americans of some prominence or importance, including George Bancroft, Emerson, Francis Lieber, and George Ticknor, and that he exerted some influence on Hawthorne, Irving, Longfellow, Lowell, and Poe. None of this influence seems to have been very significant, and some of it is conjectural.

Matenko's study suffers from the fact that E. H. Zeydel, in his *Ludwig Tieck and England* (1931) and *Ludwig Tieck, The German Romanticist* (1935), had stolen most of his potential thunder in advance, since it is illusory to treat of American literary relations with Europe during most of the nineteenth century without reference to Great Britain. While it is not Matenko's fault that his gleanings are slim, I think it was a mistake to expand them into a full-length treatise. Trivial details, including admissions of noninfluence, take up too much space; and a remark in Longfellow's journal, which can only tend to weaken the author's case, after being quoted three times on p. 58 and discussed at some length, is quoted again as a new statement on p. 63.

The index presents 360 names, an extraordinary total for 96 pages of running text; it turns out that 107 of these derive from the appendix and bibliography, and that in a large number of other cases the person named has little or no actual relation to Ludwig Tieck. This is "scholarship" carried to unrewarding lengths. Nor is the scholarship itself impeccable; I found misprints and faulty English.

In sum, I would award the author E for effort, but not J for judgment.

BAYARD QUINCY MORGAN

Stanford, Calif.

THE POLITICAL NOVEL. By Joseph L. Blotner. Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1955. v, 100 p. (Doubleday Short Studies in Political Science.)

The Political Novel is a brief interdisciplinary study written by a specialist in literature for the benefit of the political scientist. Dr. Blotner's purpose is "to indicate the gradual development of the political novel in England and the United States, to show what it has produced in several other countries, and to demonstrate the insights it can give in this area of human behavior to students of literature, politics, and related disciplines, and to the general reader" (p. 9).

Unfortunately Dr. Blotner has done a disservice to students of both political science and literature. Instead of showing "the gradual development of the political novel," he has laid down a highly arbitrary set of categories, based upon distinctions without differences, which reveal the superficiality of his analysis. Thus under the rubric of "The Novelist as Political Historian," Dr. Blotner often says nothing that he has not previously said in a chapter on "The Novel as a Political Instrument." Concerning Dos Passos' *Adventures of a Young Man*, for example, we are told in one chapter that Dos Passos "analyzes the growth of the American Communist Party and explains the gullibility of the Americans deceived by it" (p. 15), while in the other chapter we are informed that the novelist "deals with Communist infiltration of the American labor movement in the thirties" (p. 39).

Moreover, Dr. Blotner's survey is so wayward and incomplete as to be bibliographically valueless. If Stendhal's *Charterhouse of Parma* is a political novel, why not *Lucien Leuwen*? If *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is worthy of consideration, why not the enormously influential *Max Havelaar* by Multatuli? Why include Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* and ignore Tolstoy's *War and Peace*? What standards justify the inclusion of Malraux's *Man's Fate* and the exclusion of *Man's Hope* and *Days of Wrath*? Why discuss such works as Paul Gallico's *Trial by Terror* and overlook Trilling's *The Middle of the Journey*? Such omissions seem all the more incredible when we find Dr. Blotner gravely discussing the significance of Shellabarger's *Prince of Foxes*.

Dr. Blotner describes those novels he includes in a manner similar to that of a reference book such as E. A. Baker's *Guide to the Best Fiction*, and then points a platitudinous moral. Thus, of Forster's *A Passage to India*, he writes: "As an appeal either for love or withdrawal from India, the book is a political instrument" (p. 23). Such oversimplification is equally misleading when applied to Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, from which Dr. Blotner extracts a message of simple-minded liberalism that ignores the ideological complexities of the Spanish situation.

His "insights" seem to be derived not from the novels themselves but from the cliché background of mass communication or elementary textbook information. Thus the reader is urged to drudge through Sinclair's Lanny Budd saga in order to learn the following about the Germans: "A people smarting from humiliating defeat had accepted the dream of a thousand year Reich" (p. 62). Symptomatic of the substitution of vague, secondhand generalizations for close analysis is his panoramic paragraph on English political life:

"The English political novel presents a people whose political processes have operated in a well-defined manner with progressively decreasing violence. England had its Wars of the Roses and its Cavaliers and Roundheads, but with the exception of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1746 [sic], resort to arms as a means of domestic change has been in the discard for the past two hundred years of English history ... The novel reflects this pattern. It is one of change within the framework of relative stability. The Right wing and the Left are the two poles between which the political ions flow. The names of the poles may vary, as may some of the elements in their chemical composition, but their function remains the same" (pp. 48-49).

Dr. Blotner's failure has been the greater because an introductory study of the novel as a tool for the political scientist has wanted doing for a long time. Such a study is of particular importance today when political science has undergone a significant shift from an institutional approach to government, which emphasized forms and structures, to one in which political behavior and political processes are stressed. In his role as observer of society the novelist can breathe life into institutions; he can also furnish important clues as to motives of political behavior. He can do all this because he is less committed to a theory, because his canvas is far broader than that of the political scientist, who perforce must operate within his discipline.

Dr. Blotner, defining "political" in the narrowest sense, sees the political novel in terms of "the politician at work: legislating, campaigning, mending political fences, building his career" (p. 2). But to insist that the characters of a novel "must carry out political acts or move in a political environment" (out go Sinclair's *The Jungle* and Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*) is to ignore the substructure of political life. Dr. Blotner has misunderstood the truly valuable function which the novelist can perform for the political scientist. It is just because man is not merely political for the novelist that he may guide the political scientist to a

deeper understanding of politics. Thus the problem of Kyo Gisors, the hero of Malraux's *Man's Fate*, is not solely one of organizing the Communist uprising in Shanghai; the success or failure of his organizational plans is deeply intertwined with his position as a Eurasian, and with his ambiguous relationship to his wife and father.

Finally, although he worries the artificial distinction between "political" and "nonpolitical," Dr. Blotner fails to consider the far more important distinction between the good and the bad novel as instruments of political analysis. The bad novel can only be of interest to the political scientist if it has also contributed towards some significant political action.

It is no accident that a shallow view of politics derives from *The Honorable Peter Sterling* or Sinclair's *Presidential Agent*; they are simply bad novels. On the other hand, such a work as Kafka's *The Trial*, which Dr. Blotner would undoubtedly disqualify, as he does Melville's *Mardi*, for treating politics "allegorically or symbolically" (p. 2), provides a far more valuable understanding of politics and of the bureaucratic personality of our times.

Looking to the future Dr. Blotner sees a greater output of political novels because, "with modern mass communication media, more people are now involved in and aware of politics than ever before" (p. 95). He fails to see the threat that such media present to the deeper perspective which the good novel has to offer. It is therefore to be hoped that students of the political novel will profit from Dr. Blotner's failure and turn to the novel, whether symbolic or naturalistic, in a spirit that respects its integrity as a work of art and cherishes the understanding it affords of the life of man and society.

ROBERT C. GORDON
LUCIAN MARQUIS

University of Oregon

MUSIQUE ET POÉSIE AU XVI^e^ SIÈCLE. Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1954. 384 p.

In this day of alarums and excursions, it is heartening to find a group of scholars gathering from various parts of the Western world to hold a symposium on a subject as far removed from the atomic atmosphere as "musique et poésie au XVI^e^ siècle." One of the "colloques du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique," meeting in Paris, June 30 to July 4, 1953, this assembly included men and women from half a dozen countries whose avowed purpose, as brought out in the opening address by Professor Lebègue, was "examiner de près le mariage de Musique et de Poésie, tel qu'il fut réalisé pendant la Renaissance." The papers presented, now published as *Musique et poésie au XVI^e^ siècle*, are varied enough to interest students of many aspects of the Renaissance—Romance languages, philosophy, and social history, as well as music.

Nearly half the papers deal with some aspect of French belles lettres or music. M. G. Thibault surveys the types of verse set to music, by what poets, and by what composers, during the first half of the century. Professor Saulnier evaluates musical ideas in Maurice Scève's literary background and mentions parts of *Délie* set to music; and Professor Lebègue discusses Ronsard's knowledge about music, especially "les rapports que Ronsard établissait entre la poésie et la musique" (but this largely with respect to such vague terms as the *harmonie du vers*, the *sonorité musicale* of the poetry), concluding—to the surprise, surely, of no one—that with Ronsard music was always subordinate to poetry. Fresher in content is M. Lesure's discussion of the *chanson populaire* ca. 1500 (a little known type of music, since no truly authentic examples exist), including dance songs, *fricassées* (quodlibets),

and songs in farces, together with the place of the popular song in the social life of the time. Kenneth Levy's essay on the development of the *air de cour* (called variously *vaudeville, air, air de cour,* and *chansonnette*), a model of clarity and logic, contains bibliographical data about this form, a stylistic description of its development, and a discussion of historical factors which were responsible for its appearance (chiefly humanism); and M. Verchaly complements this with a technical description of the *air de cour*—poetry and music—up to 1620. In the realm of musical effects, Miss Yates elaborates upon a topic touched upon in her erudite book on the French academies—Le Jeune's music at the wedding festivities of the duc de Joyeuse (1581). And, in the realm of musical theory (including Italy as well as France), Professor Chailley, director of the Institut de Musicologie at the University of Paris, contributes an illuminating essay on chromaticism, beginning with its use in Greek music, explaining chromatic usage in the Renaissance, and lightly covering its changing aspects up to our own day.

England is represented by five papers. In the first of these, Denis Stevens deals with the English song before the period of the madrigal—not altogether successfully, because of lack of source material. Professor Westrup of Oxford reworks a well-ploughed field, the influence of Italian music on the English madrigal, and discovers that Morley alone was enthusiastic in welcoming and transforming the Italian madrigal and in formulating a taste for this music: "C'est lui sans aucun doute qui contribua le plus à développer le goût pour le madrigal anglais et qui encouragea les autres musiciens à essayer ce genre de composition." Cambridge is represented by Thurston Dart with a paper more concerned with sheerly instrumental music than any in the collection—the role of the dance in the English air; the thesis here is that, if Morley was responsible for the vogue of the madrigal, Dowland was responsible for the air—largely because of his experience with various musical forms in France in his youth. Gem of the lot (and indeed, of the whole collection, in my opinion) is an essay on Orlando Gibbons by a Frenchman, Jean Jacquot. Secure in his literary, philosophical, and musical backgrounds and beautifully clear in his terminology, M. Jacquot shows how certain musical traits in Gibbons' work were related to Jacobean melancholy, how they moved from "le langage de l'élégie et de la passion douloureuse" to "un lyrisme d'une valeur universelle," and how they reached a height in Gibbons' setting of Ralegh's "What is our life?"—a penetrating analysis of which is the climax of M. Jacquot's essay. The subject of melancholy is interestingly developed by Professor Mellers with especial reference to the composers Ward and Willbye.

Several papers mingle Spanish and Italian trends. Spanish music at the Neapolitan court during the second half of the fifteenth century is the subject of a paper by Miss Isabel Pope, who shows many interrelationships between Spanish and Italian music and demonstrates (using a MS from Montecassino containing a unique collection of music from the court at Naples) the artificial, academic nature of the *canción* cultivated there, in contrast to the simpler, homophonic *villancico*—shows, too, the strong Franco-Flemish influence upon the aristocratic *canción*. Somewhat less successful is the attempt of Mme Suzanne Clercx to find a Spanish inspiration for the *génie héroïque* of Monteverdi, a view not well received by *l'assistance*. To the honor of Spain alone is a paper on a subject without which no symposium on Spanish music would be complete—the *romance*; Miguel Querol-Gavalda presents a highly technical study of this form and gives a very useful list of *romances* accompanied by a *table synoptique* showing musical sources, bibliography, literary texts, etc.

Italy, finally, is the inspiration for a number of papers. In the realm of philosophy and music, Mr. D. P. Walker contributes another of his illuminating essays on music humanism—specifically on Ficino's Orphic songs, mystical hymns to the

sun, sung to lyre accompaniment ("antiquus ad Orphicam lyram carminum cantus"); they were related to the doctrine of musical effects and to Plato's four "furies," and were highly influential upon La Boderie, Ronsard, and others who carried on the tradition of Platonism. More strictly musical is Professor Ghisi's discussion of the *lauda*, emphasizing *travestissement spirituel*, the fitting of sacred words to secular texts (a process generally current during the Renaissance), with a survey of source material for such compositions. And, concentrating upon an area only lightly dealt with by Professor Einstein in his definitive work on the madrigal, Mme Nanie Bridgman, using a little known MS in the Bibliothèque Nationale, studies the birth of the madrigal from the background of the academies, "d'un concours de circonstances aussi bien littéraires que musicales"—musically, by a combination of the rhythmic elements of the polyphonic *frottola* with the expressive qualities of the *strambotto*. In the field of early operatic experiments, Professor Schrade describes from contemporary accounts a performance of *Edipo tiranno* in 1585 with music by Andrea Gabriele; and Nino Pirrotta discusses ideas and performances of tragedy and comedy in the Florentine Camerata.

In the symposium, the presentation of each paper was followed by an open discussion (carefully recorded and included here), discussions which sometimes throw necessary light upon the formal papers and often indicate the reception given the views of the speakers. For example, the discussion following Mme Bridgman's remarks about music transitional to the madrigal clarified several points concerning the exact differences between *frottola*, *strambotto*, madrigal; and M. Lesure's essay on the popular song opened a discussion of folk elements in the music of other countries as well as France. Only rarely does the scholarship appear to be at fault; but to call Wyatt and Surrey "les deux célèbres amis" (p. 122) is surely overshooting the mark, since these two probably never even met. And occasionally the French translation seems to border upon the precious. A favorite bird, for instance, is changed beyond nature by French plumage when the opening lines of "le célèbre *Silver Swan*" (p. 140) appear:

> "Le cygne d'argent qui, vivant, était sans voix
> à l'approche de la mort desserra son gosier silencieux."

The book closes with a *discussion générale*, in which members of the group tried to evaluate their work. Although this symposium-within-a-symposium produced some enlightening remarks, no completely positive consensus was reached. Lack of any report on religious music (as Professor Schrade put it, "Nous avons évité ce sujet avec beaucoup de succès!") was a great loss; and Professor Schrade apparently voiced the view of the majority in summarizing: "Nous ne sommes donc pas en mesure d'affirmer que, pris dans son ensemble, le XVI^e^ siècle se distingue par une liaison intime de la musique et de la poésie." The reader will probably concur in this, and will also agree with M. Jacquot that "nous avons ouvert un certain nombre de voies nouvelles." In any case, the group wished to continue its activities and planned another symposium with emphasis upon instrumental music. This *colloque* was held in 1954, and the papers presented (speakers and titles are listed, pp. 361-362) will be published by the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique as *La Musique instrumentale de la Renaissance*. One looks forward to this book. The two volumes from the hands of these latter-day *académistes* (spiritual descendants, in a way, of Baïf's famous Academy of Music and Poetry) will add a great deal to our knowledge of the Renaissance, a knowledge constantly growing and constantly changing.

NAN COOKE CARPENTER

Montana State University

TONES INTO WORDS: MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS AS SUBJECTS OF POETRY. By Calvin S. Brown. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1953. viii, 171 p.

As the bibliography shows (36 titles are listed under the heading "Music and Literature"), the general field in which this study moves has been cultivated for a long time—one "dissertation," by an earlier Brown, having been published in London in 1763. Calvin Brown has himself made a substantial contribution to the subject in the admirable book he published in 1948, *Music and Literature*, which I had the privilege of reviewing in this journal. The present book attacks a relatively unnoticed phase of the matter, which is adequately defined by the subtitle.

The scope and direction of the author's work is clearly indicated by the chapter headings: "A Survey of Musical Literature," "Imitation of Music in Poetry," "Description of Music," "Synaesthesia and the Confusion of the Arts," "Visual Interpretations of Music," "Mood and Moral Allegory," "The Elements Combined," "Final Judgments." The scholarly nature of Brown's procedure is shown by the extent of his learned "apparatus," consisting of seven pages of notes, thirteen of "select bibliography" (he states that his total list of references exceeds 2,000), an index of sixty-five composers (or anonymous compositions), and a seven-page general index.

Moreover, the detailed treatment is scholarly throughout. It would have been only too easy, in a study of such a subject, to indulge in vague rhapsodies—as many of the quoted poets have done—or to set up general categories and merely quote extensively from poems and poets considered to fit them. Here, at first glance one is struck by the numerous (I count twenty-one) bits of musical citation scattered through the pages, and a closer examination shows how seriously Brown has taken the self-assigned task of relating a poet's view of a piece of music to the actual structure of the composition. Particularly illuminating, in this regard, is the careful attention devoted to Edgar Lee Masters' poem, "Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and the King Cobra," with the plausibly supported thesis that most of Masters' "biographical interpretation as well as his musical description" derives from Sir George Grove's *Beethoven and his Nine Symphonies*. It is, however, noteworthy that Brown has no intention of belittling Masters' achievement; on the contrary, he states (p. 136): "All these elements combine to make this poem the most successful attempt at a poetic treatment of a musical composition which has been found in the course of this study."

In his "Final Judgments," Brown presents a number of conclusions and convictions which may be considered the fruits of his harvest and the chief justification for his undertaking. The temptation to quote is strong, but I will yield to it only with respect to one significant pronouncement (p. 141): "it is certain that persons whose imagery is predominantly auditory (the analytic listeners) and those who think in terms of visual imagery (the hearers who see pictures) can never fully understand each other."

Looking through the general index, I am struck by the absence of our nineteenth-century American poets: apparently none of them (except Sidney Lanier in one poem)—Bryant, Emerson, Eugene Field, Holmes, Longfellow, Lowell, Poe, Whitman—took enough interest in music to devote any verbal song to it; yet Poe did considerable experimenting with words as vehicles of sound. Brown might find this matter worth treating in a special article.

While Brown disavows any attempt to survey the appearance of musical description outside of poetry, he does touch here and there on prose; in case he should make a study of music in fiction—which I for one should welcome—I would remind him of Du Maurier's *Trilby*, the fascination of whose musical portions has not left me yet. Another lead he might care to follow is the statement of Kipling

(missing from the index) that most of his poems began with a tune (not necessarily an existing one) marked by a strong rhythm, to which he fitted his words. It would be interesting to inquire how far other poets have been influenced by music without actually describing or mentioning it in their verse.

Another fruitful field which has hardly been worked is the employment of music as an integral part of drama, music used as an actor, so to speak. To my knowledge, Goethe was the first to make music serve a dramatic purpose, when he prevented Faust from suicide by having Easter music (as familiar to the audience as to the stage hero) strike his ear just as he had the cup of poison at his lips. In the plays of Ludwig Anzengruber, an Austrian dramatist little known in this country, music is repeatedly used in a significant way, as I showed in an article written many years ago. Of course the case of Noel Coward comes to mind at once, e.g., in *Family Album*, where the music is much more than casual or ornamental.

Coming back to Calvin Brown, it is regrettable to have to mention the vexing problem of proofreading, especially troublesome in a book with so much foreign matter; even though my scrutiny has not been exhaustive, I count thirty misprints, which seems to me excessive.

Very commendable is Brown's careful prose rendering of his foreign quotations from French and German; I find him in the main both close and accurate, though I occasionally register a dissent (e.g., on p. 102, where he makes "romantisches Sinnen" result from concern with the horn instead of preceding it; or on p. 61, where "geängstigt" is turned into "pained" instead of "startled" or "frightened."

Such objections carry little weight in the face of Brown's total achievement in this volume. In the wide range of its coverage (about 300 poems by some 135 poets are listed), in the acuteness of its critical appraisals, and in the soundness of its conclusions, it is likely to remain fundamental for any student of the relationship of music and literature.

BAYARD QUINCY MORGAN

Stanford, Calif.

L'ANGLETERRE DANS L'ŒUVRE DE MADAME DE STAËL. By Robert Escarpit. Paris: Marcel Didier, 1954. 174 p.

In the study of the foreign relations of Mme de Staël, Germany and Italy have hitherto overshadowed all other countries. We are therefore grateful to Dr. Escarpit, professor of comparative literature at the University of Bordeaux, for this excellent study, which traces the rich impact which the constitution, the history, the society, and the literature of England left upon the famous French-Swiss intermediary from Coppet. The result of the much-needed though tedious task of cataloguing every reference to England in the complete works of Mme de Staël is found in Part II of this book (pp. 57-111), which provides a complete index from Addison to Young, with special emphasis on such items as *Anglais, Angleterre, Bacon, Caractère, Constitution, Femmes, Guillaume III, Histoire, Littérature, Locke, Londres, Milton, Mœurs, Philosophie, Politique, Religion,* and *Shakespeare.* Of the 1,002 references, more than three-fourths are contained in the three basic works dealing with England; *Considérations sur les principaux événements de la Révolution française* (468), *De la Littérature* (161), and *De l'Allemagne* (132). *Corinne* follows as the fourth, with 74 references.

This statistical kernel is surrounded by other chapters which are very interesting and instructive: Part I (pp. 19-56) deals with the actual contacts of Mme de Staël with England, and Part III (pp. 113-69) attempts to interpret the figures of the index and to give us a picture of England as visualized by Mme de Staël.

With regard to actual contacts with England, we find not only brief discussions of her three trips in 1776, 1793, and 1813-14, but, equally important, of the earlier connections of her parents with England, which could not but leave their imprint on Germaine Necker—the liaison of Suzanne Curchod with Edward Gibbon and, even more significant, Necker's admiration for England and her constitution, derived from Montesquieu and passed on to his daughter, which is at the bottom of some of the finest statements in the *Considérations sur les principaux événements de la Révolution française*. For this fragmentary work was not so much a history or a condemnation of the French Revolution as a glorification of the English constitutional monarchy, of the Revolution of 1688 as the best of all revolutions, and of William of Orange as the wisest and most restrained of all monarchs. It was her firm belief that the adoption of the British system could have saved France from the heartbreaks and tyrannies of the period from 1789 to 1815. Only the Revolution of 1830 brought about a situation in France which approximated the ideal conditions of 1688.

We cannot summarize here the other chapters of this book—the relationship of Mme de Staël with Fanny Burney, Henry Crabb Robinson, Lord Byron, and Sir James Mackintosh, and her ideas about individual aspects of English life. But Mr. Escarpit has certainly made clear the inner dissension in Mme de Staël: her *a priori* determination to hail England as the harbinger of freedom, liberalism, and political maturity in her fight against Napoleon, even though she herself at times felt most uncomfortable in the stifling atmosphere of English society; her efforts to praise English literature, even though she herself was by no means free from neoclassical prejudices and had been introduced to English letters by Voltaire; her endeavors to underscore in Englishmen all those traits which she held dearest in her utopian vision of Northern Europe—mysticism, melancholy, individualism, Protestantism, justice—and to overlook whatever injustice, brutality, or hypocrisy could be found in that idealized country; the insufficiency of her contacts with representative Englishmen; her complete silence about the landscape or the art of England.

It is especially when we consider that Mme de Staël stopped with Cowper and had not one word to say about the English poets of romanticism that we become aware of the great difference between her *De l'Allemagne* and what might be called her *De l'Angleterre*—for in the case of England she was above all a historian of the political past, of the fascinating days from Cromwell, the Stuarts, and William III up to Locke and the *Letters of Junius*, whereas in the case of Germany she dealt with the culture of the present. Mme de Staël must often have written with tongue in cheek when she described things which simply were not there (for instance, the social justice and the economic happiness of an England fighting desperately against the Continental Blockade)—but she was resolved to see in England what she wanted to see and to use that blessed island to document her own Necker-Staëlian utopianism. Superficial in observation of detail, she was brilliant and at times accurate in her broad generalizations, and her "prisme déformant" of English impressions was destined to be a powerful and alluring force in later nineteenth-century interpretations of England.

Apart from a few misprints (like Grey for Gray, Klopstok for Klopstock), there is only one flaw which this reviewer was able to find in Mr. Escarpit's fine book—his complete disregard of the Swiss heritage of Mme de Staël. The word "Switzerland" is mentioned only once in the entire book. Whatever traditions of political liberalism and utopianism lingered on in Mme de Staël are ascribed to her father rather than to Geneva or to Switzerland as a whole. Mr. Escarpit is at a loss to explain the unusualness of Mme de Staël's political thinking against the background of eighteenth-century France ("La France qu'elle représente, et qui

aurait pu être celle de Necker, n'a jamais existé de son vivant," p. 166)—but, if he had taken the trouble to investigate the liberal, Protestant, and basically anti-French and pro-British traditions of her compatriots Graviseth, Muralt, Haller, Bodmer, and Rousseau, he would have recognized a generally valid Swiss viewpoint which was merely continued and intensified by Mme de Staël.

W. P. F.

VARIA

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Modern Fiction Studies is a new critical quarterly published by the Modern Fiction Club of Purdue University. The Managing Editor is Maurice Beebe, Purdue University, Lafayette, Ind. Subscription price, $1.00 a year. This mimeographed quarterly is devoted to criticism, scholarship, and bibliography of American, English, and European fiction since about 1880.

The *Revue des Études Italiennes*, has resumed publication with a new series, I (1954), under the auspices of the Société d'Études Italiennes, as before, and with the support of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. Comparatists and Italianists everywhere will welcome the reappearance of this excellent journal (Paris, Librairie Marcel Didier).

AUMLA, the journal of the Australasian Universities Modern Languages Association has appeared annually since August 1953. Available from the Department of French, University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

The Institute for the Study of Comparative Literature of the State University of Utrecht is now publishing on cards (slightly smaller than 3x5) a Comparative Bibliography of all important publications appearing in the Netherlands, Flanders, and South Africa. The subscription price is f 10.- a year.

The Comparative Literature Section of MLA announces for the Chicago meeting this December the tentative discussion topic: Is the (comparative) history of a genre possible? Papers outlining the history of a genre, preferably in a single literary era, are invited. Papers or substantial abstracts should be submitted to Professor George B. Parks, Queens College, Flushing, N.Y., before September 1.